

PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE
STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This basic qualitative research study investigated the experience of African American male students who participated in a pre-college preparatory program prior to college enrollment. Data were collected from three African American male college students and three administrators of a college student support services program. Data collected from three administrators were used to provide additional insight regarding student experiences of African-American male students.

The findings of the study discovered that three African American male students who participated in the study perceived that the summer bridge program had a positive influence upon them. Specifically the participants in the study perceived that the pre-college program provided them with information, awareness, and encouragement concerning their decision to pursue post-secondary education. The perception of pre-college programs enhanced the students' first year college experience by providing them with increased interaction with faculty and staff, mentoring opportunities, and academic support. The perception of pre-college programs further enhanced the students' academic interaction by assisting them in overcoming personal obstacles, academic obstacles, and financial obstacles.

The primary contribution of this study was the discovery that students who make a smooth and expeditious transition from the summer bridge program to the student support services program was the key ingredient to academic success for African American males at the

college level. The administrators who participated in the study coined the phrase “the ten day rule” to indicate the time period which was crucial for first year African American males to make the transition from the summer bridge program to the student support services. Those students who made the transition within a ten day period, as the student participants in this study, generally succeed and those students who do not make the transition in a timely fashion generally have difficulties.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Wife, Quita and my Son, Kendrick II. Both of you truly inspired me to complete this journey, in your own unique way. Also would like to dedicate this to all the underrepresented students who felt that pursuit of a post-secondary education was not an option. Every underrepresented student can embark on this journey, run and complete *the educational race.*

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF DEFINITIONS	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PROBLEM	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	19
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	41
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	55
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS	75
REFERENCES	98
APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol (Students)	107
APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol (Administrators)	110
APPENDIX C: Approved IRB	113

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Site Analysis	58
Table 2: Student/Administrator Breakdown by Site.....	59
Table 3: Research Questions w/Themes	76

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Weidman's Model of Undergraduate Socialization	37
Figure 2: The Educational Race.....	38
Figure 3: The Educational Journey	39

LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Academic need refers to poor academic performance prior to entering college or during college.

Indicators of academic need may be, for example, low grades in high school or college, low scores on college admissions exams, and limited English proficiency.

Annual performance report (APR) is the report that each Student Support Services (SSS) program grantee submits to the U.S. Department of Education on an annual basis. The APR contains student-level data on project participants. These data include information about eligibility status, academic need, enrollment, persistence, and degree completion for students served during the reporting year as well as prior participants. The Department does not require grantees to track the academic progress and degree completion of participants who transfer to another postsecondary institution. Therefore, the APR contains information only about achievements that occur within grantee institutions.

Associate degree refers to a degree granted for the successful completion of a sub-baccalaureate program of study, which usually requires at least two years (or the equivalent) of full-time, college-level study. This includes degrees granted in a cooperative or work-study program.

Bachelor's degree refers to a degree granted for the successful completion of a baccalaureate program of study, which usually requires at least four years (or the equivalent) of full-time, college-level study. This includes degrees granted in a cooperative or work-study program.

Cohort refers to a specific group of students established for tracking purposes. In this report, the cohort is defined as first-time freshmen.

Completion (for students who enrolled in four-year institutions) refers to obtaining a bachelor's degree within six years of entering college as a freshman.

Rural refers to institutions located in distant, remote or fringe areas, or in towns.

Urban refers to institutions located in small, midsize, and large cities.

Suburban refers to institutions located in the “urban fringe” or suburbs of all sizes.

Degree-granting institution refers to a postsecondary institution that is eligible for *Title IV* federal financial aid programs, and that grants an associate or higher degree. For an institution to be eligible to participate in *Title IV* financial aid programs, it must offer a program of at least 300 clock hours in length, have accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, have been in business for at least two years, and have signed a participation agreement with the Department.

Disability status is one of the eligibility criteria for receiving SSS program services. Students with disabilities may have been diagnosed with either a physical or mental impairment that would limit their ability to participate in college activities.

Eligibility statuses are the criteria used by the SSS program to determine whether students qualify to receive program services. The five eligibility statuses are

- low-income and first-generation;
- low-income only;
- first-generation only;
- disabled; and disabled and low-income.

- **Enrollment intensity** refers to students' full-time and part-time postsecondary enrollment patterns within the period of observation. Students are classified as enrolled consistently as full-time students (i.e., within each semester during the period of observation), enrolled consistently as part-time students, or enrolled as a mix of full-time and part-time.

First-generation refers to a student whose parents or legal guardians did not receive a bachelor's degree.

Four-year institution refers to an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees.

Freshmen students refer to students who are entering college for the first time and have never attended another institution in the past. Among SSS participants, freshmen students are new to the SSS program, receiving program services for the first time during their freshman year.

Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are identified in the *IPEDS* data as institutions in which at least 25 % of enrolled students are of Hispanic origin, and no less than 50 % of these Hispanic students are low-income students. For SSS grantees, HSIs are defined in federal law as accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education, with 25 % or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment.

Historically Black College and University (HBCU) refers to an accredited postsecondary institution that was founded before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a publically available data source that contains demographic, enrollment, and graduation information about postsecondary institutions. Data are collected on an annual basis by the National Center for Education Statistics from all public, private, and vocational postsecondary institutions that participate in federal financial aid programs.

Low-income refers to taxable family income that does not exceed 150 % of the national poverty level in the calendar year prior to a student's entering college for the first time. This poverty level is established by the U.S. Census Bureau and varies based on family size.

Minority-serving institution refers to an institution identified as a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), a tribally controlled college or university (TCCU), or a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI).

Persistence (for students who enrolled in four-year institutions) is defined as continued enrollment in postsecondary education into the fall term of a student's second year of college.

Private not-for-profit institution refers to an educational institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk. These institutions include both independent not-for-profit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.

Public institution refers to an educational institution in which the programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials, and which is supported largely by public funds.

Race/ethnicity are used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The groups are as follows:

- American Indian or Alaska Native — a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliations or community recognition.
- Asian — a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands.

- Black or African American — a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- Hispanic or Latino — a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- White — a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.
- Other — persons identifying as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii or other Pacific islands, such as Samoa and Guam) and persons with more than one reported race (i.e., of a multiracial background).

Tribally controlled college or university (TCCU) refers to a postsecondary institution that is controlled and operated by American Indian tribes.

Two-year institution refers to an institution that awards primarily associate degrees.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PROBLEM

American colleges and universities have long served as a major focal point in providing educational opportunities for students to assume larger and expanded roles in society. Many American students have been told early, even in grade school, that in order to achieve financial success, an individual has to attend college and earn a degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In previous years, simply being accepted into college elevated individuals into higher positions within society; with the completion of a specialized academic program of study, a student might access a higher paying position that offered economic benefits and social prestige (Thelin, 2004). Studies indicate that college graduates earn significantly more money over the course of their lifetimes as compared to high school graduates (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, individuals with bachelor's degrees earned an average salary of \$46,900 as compared to \$22,900 for those just completing high school (Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, & Kristapovich, 2014). Studies also indicate that college graduates tend to live healthier lifestyles and are less likely to smoke, suffer from obesity, and experience depression or other mental issues (Osterman, 2008).

Becoming a college graduate makes the American higher education system so intriguing for many prospective students. However, becoming a college graduate has created some false

realities by the perception of exclusion—specifically related a student's race or socio-economic status. Findings from previous research studies indicate that the United States experiences challenges in providing resources and support for African-Americans, especially in the area of education (Harvey & Harvey 2005; Harvey, 2008; Levin, Belfield, Muenning, & Rouse, 2007; Moore & Owens, 2008). A great many underrepresented students, including those identifying as African-Americans, Hispanic, and American Indian, who do not pursue higher education opportunities for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons can be attributed to the lack of financial aid, lack of adequate information regarding college admissions, and inadequate prior academic preparation at the secondary level (USDOE/Spellings Report, 2006).

According to a 2010 study, only 47 % of African-American males graduate on time from high school (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010). African-American males comprise 7.9 % of the total population within 18-24 year olds, but only represent 2.9 % of undergraduate students at public flagship colleges and universities. Additionally, according to the United States Department of Education, the overall college graduation rate for African-American males is 33.1 % as compared to 54.5 % for white males (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). African-Americans have the lowest college completion rates among genders and all ethnic groups (Harper, 2006). These low percentages clearly indicate that extreme gaps exist for African-American males pursuing, but not completing post-secondary education.

Academic institutions have sought to reverse this trend by developing and supporting programs designed to increase the enrollment and retention of African-American men. Doing so would allow the United States to reposition itself as a leader in providing more educated workers to take on the more specialized jobs that exist in the current competitive global economy. Clearly African-American males are an underrepresented group that can immediately improve upon and

close the overall college completion gaps. Colleges and universities that currently have low percentages of African-American males within their current student population could benefit tremendously by focusing additional resources such as financial aid and academic support that target underrepresented students, especially African-American males. This targeted effort could prepare underrepresented students to initially enroll at their respective institutions, and work with them once they arrive by providing the tools necessary towards earning a college degree. Obtaining a college degree allows individuals to earn higher salaries over one's life span and greatly assist the overall economic wealth of the United States. Obtaining a college degree ultimately leads to increased completion rates for colleges and universities and allows individuals who once were considered low-income to raise their individual economic status (USDOE/Spellings Report, 2006).

One of the initiatives that then presidential candidate Barack Obama used as the center point during his 2008 presidential campaign platform was change. One of the many changes in which he stressed was the restructuring and a renewed focus on education both at the secondary and post-secondary levels. After this election, President Obama continued his campaign promise of expanding access to higher education and stressing its importance, not only for individuals but for the entire nation through his four-step plan designed to make college more accessible and affordable. These actions included the support of college outreach programs aimed at providing resources to low-income students, and college credit initiatives aimed at providing college level credits at community colleges that will transfer into senior colleges. While President Donald Trump has pursued different avenues related to improving college access, a look back at the past decade of federal efforts to improve access to higher education shows the potential for change.

Currently, the United States competes in a competitive global environment. The levels of educational attainment of American citizens and the American work force is very important today, perhaps more than any other period in the past. The United States has an overall 77 % high school graduation rate with a troubling high school dropout rate; these rates fall well below most developed nations (Ripley, 2008). These large high school dropout rates represent one of many reasons why the United States has fallen behind in the world in educational attainment. Simply put, if students drop out of high school, they will less likely to attempt college entrance, which automatically decreases the overall college graduation rates, especially for African-American males.

Former President Obama realized that in order for America to maintain its global and economic power, drastic changes to the current educational system are needed in order to produce a highly trained and very capable workforce. These changes begin at the administrative levels, while being implemented on the frontlines inside of the classroom. One of the many challenges that educational administrators both at the secondary and post- secondary levels must continually monitor is how their current respective academic programs provide their students with the proper required skills that would enable them to become successful and productive members of a constantly changing society. If their programs are not providing their students with the required skills, then are they conducting proper assessments, measurements and improvements in order to achieve this goal?

Federally supported programs exist that offer support for African-American male students to complete high school and pursue a college degree. Research has shown that these pre-college programs can provide significant benefits to students through increased parental involvement and homework completion during their secondary years (Edwards, 2010).

Additionally, pre-college programs have also provided colleges and universities competitive advantages such as additional recruiting and financial opportunities (Edwards, 2010). One of the areas in which colleges and universities can seek to enhance their educational goals is through the use and implementation of pre-college programs by providing additional resources that will benefit all underrepresented students, most importantly African-American males.

Statement of the Problem

African-American male students pursue postsecondary education at disproportionately low numbers compared to other student groups (Harper & Harris, 2012). In order to increase the number of college graduates overall, additional emphasis will be required to target immediate college enrollment rates of underrepresented groups, most notably African-American males, who represents one of the most underserved and underrepresented groups (Harper, 2012). In each year between 1990 and 2012, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from high-income families was higher than the rates for their peers from low- and middle-income families. In 2012, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from high-income families was 81 %, as compared to 52 % from those from low-income families. This difference is 29 % higher than those from low-income families. Also, in 2012, the immediate college enrollment rate from middle-income families was 65 %. This difference is a 16 % differential between higher income families as compared to middle-income families (Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, & Kristapovich, 2014).

This gap has persisted for decades. For example, in 1990, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers between high and low-income families was 75 % as compared to 45 %. This difference represents a 30 % differential between the family income levels. Also in 1990, the immediate college enrollment rate from middle-income families was 56 %. This difference represents a 19 % differential between higher income families as compared to middle-income families (Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, & Kristapovich, 2014). Despite the overall increases in the immediate college enrollment rates for high school completers between 1990 and 2012 for high, middle and low-income families, a gap persists.

Arguments continue to revolve around questions such as: Why are African-American males not enrolling in college? Who ultimately decides how to prepare African-American males to get accepted into college? Once African-American males get to college, how can colleges ensure African-American males earn their baccalaureate degrees? Many studies have supported the fact that pre-college programs provide underrepresented students with additional learning opportunities that would prepare them for acceptance into college and give them the skills needed to complete a college degree (Gullatt & Jan, 2002).

TRIO Programs originated in 1964 as a part of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society Programs. Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search and Student Support Services were the three programs collectively known as TRIO whose purpose was to provide underrepresented students information regarding, financial aid, academic preparation, and the college application process. The resources were designed to close the educational gaps that were created due to segregation based on race which existed since the Federal Ruling *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, which made segregation based on race legal. The TRIO program is one of the programs which

were referenced in the previous paragraphs. The summer bridge program which connects the Upward Bound in high schools to the Student Support Services in college and universities is the program which the participants in this study experienced as part of their introduction into higher education. As such, the TRIO program played an intricate role in the formation of this research study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs prior to college enrollment and how their participation prepared them for college enrollment. The focus will be on African-American men who have completed their freshmen year of college. In terms of context, this study explores federal TRIO pre-college programs, specifically the Student Support Services program. Amidst all the original Federal TRIO pre-college programs (Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and Student Support Services) that provide assistance and educational attainment for lower income and disadvantaged students, the Educational Talent Search (ETS) program is one that can immediately impact college admissions for low income and disadvantaged students (ETS Fact Report 2016). Upward Bound primarily focuses on students in their preparation for college interest or their specific program of study, and Student Support Services (SSS) is aimed at supporting first generation, disadvantaged and low-income students once they have arrived at college leading to formal completion of college program. Each SSS participant receives academic tutoring, guidance in selecting postsecondary academic courses, information related to public and private scholarship and financial aid programs, assistance with completing financial aid applications, financial and economic literacy counseling, assistance with student application

to graduate and professional programs and assistance with student application to and from four year programs (SSS Fact Report 2016).

These programs seek to provide assistance and support to those students from backgrounds that place them at huge disadvantages; the programs encourage disadvantaged students to not only complete their high school education, but also to both apply and continue their education at the postsecondary level, while providing academic, financial and career counseling. The programs assist not only current high school students, but also students that have completed high school and never attempted to continue their post-secondary educational pursuits. In order to guide this study on how pre-college program participation shape the experiences of African-American men in their first year in college, the following research questions will be explored:

1. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their choice of pursuing a post-secondary education?
2. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their first year college experience?
3. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their academic interactions on campus?

Historical Perspective

In order to explore how the challenge for racial equality and diversity in higher education originated, an examination of American higher education history is necessary. In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified and went into effect, after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 that ended slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment, most notably the equal protection clause, provides that no state

shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. This amendment was designed to include the newly freed African-American slaves, but still the dreams of equality would not instantly appear, especially in education. If the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution clearly stated that no state shall deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws, then why would the United States Supreme Court later render a ruling that segregation on the basis of race is legal?

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) was the first landmark Supreme Court case regarding segregation. This case was about an African-American man travelling on railroad passenger cars, but the ultimate outcome of this case determined how the federal government would deal with African-American citizens: “separate, but equal facilities” were legal. This ruling sent a very loud and clear message in how states could provide services to the newly freed slaves, most notably in education. As a result of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, many educational facilities for African-American students were separated on the basis of race, and were not adequately or equally funded. This lack of equal funding perpetuated large gaps in economic status and education achievement especially for African-Americans.

The overall ruling on *Plessy v. Ferguson* was not a matter of a violation of an individual’s rights, but over the issue of social rights in terms of race. As a result of this ruling, immediate and swift actions related to separation by race began. One immediate action was the lack of educational funding by states to the newly separated black schools in facilities, textbooks and supplies. This lack of funding has continued to be in place well into the 20th century and serves as a catalyst in the educational gaps that currently exist different ethnic groups today (Klarman, 2004).

Social, cultural, and legal challenges to integrated educational systems persisted for decades. During a commencement address delivered on June 4, 1965 at Howard University in Washington D.C., President Lyndon Johnson stated:

You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want and do as you desire and choose the leaders you please. You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race, and then say, you are free to compete with all the others, and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates. This is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity. (Johnson, 1965)

After this key address to a predominately African-American audience, the Educational Talent Search program was created by Congress and evolved as a part of President Johnson's Great Society Programs. The Great Society Programs were initiated to tackle poverty and provide assistance to a new generation of college students in order to expand access and secure funding to attend college as a result of the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Educational Talent Search, one of the original three federal TRIO programs, was designed to bridge educational gaps and provide opportunities to low-income and first generation college students in order to prepare them to enter into college. Upward bound, the first federal pre-college program, was created in 1964 under the Economic Opportunity Act, followed by Educational Talent Search in 1965 and finally Special Programs for Disadvantaged Students, now called Student Support Services (SSS) in 1968. These three programs collectively were

known as TRIO, which served to increase educational opportunity and attainment for all Americans from lower socio-economic statuses.

Prior to the creation of TRIO programs, many students, including African-Americans, were not allowed to enroll in some American college and universities simply by the color of their skin. The Morrill Act of 1862 led to the establishment numerous land-grant universities. The Morrill Act of 1890 led to the establishment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to provide college opportunities to African-American students. HBCUs which were established under the Second Morrill Act in 1890 received limited funding, which resulted in substandard buildings, lack of supplies, lack of qualified instructors, and lack of future job prospects once these students graduated. As President Johnson stated during his commencement address at Howard University, it was not feasible or realistic to deny individuals opportunities for years and suddenly expect them to fully being able to compete.

After the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, education systems could no longer be segregated and funded separately, but would instead be integrated and equally funded. Most states were slow in their response to the Supreme Court ruling which led to additional legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Due to all of the years of inequality in resources and secondary education preparation, many students now attempting to gain access to college were not prepared to succeed. The creation of the federal TRIO programs was designed to close the higher education gaps that existed for many lower income and first generation college students.

Background of the Study

The American higher educational system tends to overlook underrepresented student groups such as African-Americans, Hispanics and American Indians. These student groups are consistently represented in lower college enrollment numbers, which also creates additional pressure on colleges and universities to develop and maintain diversity on college campuses. In previous years, colleges and universities attempted to create diversity solely through their admissions processes which alone did not solve the larger problem of increasing retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students.

Some colleges and universities have attempted to achieve and maintain diversity on college campuses for underrepresented students by utilizing the consideration of race as a factor within the overall admissions process. Race conscious admissions goals serve to expand access to underrepresented groups that are often overlooked in order to generate greater diversity on their campuses, although changes in recent decades seek to increase diversity without the explicit consideration of race. For example, the University of Texas system created a plan that automatically allows students from the top 10 % in their high school graduating class to earn admission. Colleges and private citizens have sought the assistance of the judicial system to enforce existing laws (Truman Commission, 1947, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Higher Education Act of 1965, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, and *Fisher v. Texas*, as a few examples) and ensure that underrepresented students have access and equal opportunities to pursue higher education in their quest to earn a college degree.

While African-American males are traditionally underrepresented on college campuses, their graduation rates are disturbing. According to the United States Department of Education,

the overall graduation rate for African-American males is 33.1 % as compared to 54.5 % for white males (U.S. Department of Education 2004). Why is it that African-American males are one of the most underrepresented groups on college campuses today? A great many underrepresented students such as African-Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians are not pursuing higher educational opportunities for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons could be attributed to the lack of financial aid, lack of adequate information regarding college admissions, and inadequate prior academic preparation at the secondary level (USDOE/Spellings Report, 2006).

Lack of Financial Resources

African-American men frequently lack the financial resources required to enter college in comparison to their White counterparts. One issue related to African-American males not enrolling in college is the rising tuition cost. Despite the increased enrollment of underrepresented students in higher education from lower-income families, these students experience gaps in the ability to pay increased tuition in comparison to lesser amount of financial aid received (Callan, 2006; Haycock, 2006; Tinto 2008). Students from low-income families take out more student and private loans more often than students from more affluent backgrounds (Carey & Dillon, 2009). The growth of student financial aid represents a large transformation in the financing of postsecondary education, which began when Congress authorized the large-scale federal student financial aid programs in 1965 as a result of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Student financial aid programs now represent the largest sources of revenue that fund the postsecondary education system. While student financial aid provides the single largest funding

source for post-secondary educational pursuits, half of the undergraduates and their respective families use some form of financial aid to fund college expenses. According 2018 study entitled *Student Loans Weigh the Heaviest on Black and Hispanic Students*, 87% of African Americans students are taking out student loans to attend public four year universities as compared to 60% of white students. African-American student loan borrower rate of 78% is the highest of any other group and their borrower rate exceeds the national average of 60% (Safier, 2018).

Financial aid programs are designed to serve two main purposes. First, they serve to increase access for students to attend college, especially from lower income families. Second, they provide students the opportunity to attend college, even those institutions with higher tuition rates. Many low-income students are less likely to obtain a college degree based upon their significant reliance on financial aid, especially student loans (Callan, 2006; Haycock, 2006; Tinto, 2008). More importantly, student loans provide students additional choices or access to attend college, while grants tend to be more advantageous to lower income students. While both student loans and grants still improve student financing options, both may not provide the necessary funding needed to pay for college. This weakness results in students from lower income families relying more heavily on loans to pay for college in comparison to those students from middle income families. Minority students and students from lower income families will continue to face difficulties in completing a college program due to the disparities in actual tuition cost versus amount of funds available to finance college (Haycock, 2006).

Access to and choice of available financial aid programs are important factors in the decision making process for students to determine what particular college or university they will attend or more importantly, can afford to attend. These choices will also lead to an increase in the number of borrowers and the amounts of loans these students take out in order to attend to

college, creating additional barriers for African-American males in their quest to obtain college degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). As more students continue to use student loans as their primary source of funding in order to pay for college, this barrier will create huge financial challenges for the student, the graduate and even their families with both short and long term financial implications. Based upon ability, students from lower income families are less likely to attend college versus those from higher income families (Gladieux, & Swail, 1999).

Lack of Access to Information

At times African-Americans males lack adequate access to information that would enable them to prepare for college while they are enrolled in secondary education. One of the keys to addressing why so many African-American males are not completing college as compared to White males is through the lack of formal mentoring, which is one way that students learn about the college admissions process. Some African-American males aspire to and emulate individuals they consider successful such as sports figures, but studies emphasize the importance of mentoring on the academic trajectory of African-American males, especially at the high school and college levels through counseling (Toldson, 2008). When African-American males arrive on a college campus, the mentorship role becomes extremely important. The focus of mentoring now shifts towards a more advisory and developmental role with the establishment of goals by faculty, and academic advisors (Sutton, 2006).

Lack of Academic Preparation

Some African-American students fail to complete college because they are not prepared academically to withstand the rigors of a college curriculum once they arrive on campus. This fact challenges the assumption that when a student arrives at college, they should already have all the cognitive, emotional, and social tools to complete a rigorous program of study. Such an assumption does not seem to apply universally to all K-12 school systems, in terms of expectations for student preparation upon arrival. Student academic preparation results from a complex social process: the interaction of the student, the family, the community, the school, and local, state, and federal government. Oftentimes a gap exists between student learning levels and the expectations of colleges and universities for their freshman students. This gap is often referred to as the “expectations gap,” and it has widened over time.

This widened gap means that more students are required to take additional courses such as remedial math and English once they arrive at college in order to obtain the basic skill levels they should have learned at the secondary level. This process termed as remediation is common. Over 40 % of college students take at least one remedial course which creates additional time to completion for the student as well as additional cost to both the taxpayers and the higher educational industry as a whole (Breneman & Costell, 1998).

In their book entitled *Academically Adrift*, Arum and Roska, professors of sociology at New York University, conducted studies on more than 2,300 first year students at 24 institutions using the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), which offers an authentic approach to understanding teaching and learning in higher education through a continuous improvement model. In addition, the CLA helps institutions improve undergraduate education through

assessments, professional development, best practices and collaboration (Arum & Roska, 2011).

After the first year survey, the same students were then surveyed at the end of their second year.

The results showed that 45 % of these students demonstrated no significant improvement in a range of skills—including critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing—during their first two years of college (Arum & Roska, 2011). Additional findings in their studies indicated other areas of interest, especially in areas of race. Their findings noted that African-American and Hispanics scored lower on the CLA compared to white students. This study raises questions about what benefits students gain not just from remedial coursework, but coursework in general, and how these benefits accrue for different racial/ethnic groups.

In contemporary society, a bachelor's degree is now required for entry into a growing number of professions. Many parents begin planning for their children's college expenses as soon as they are born, but as college enrollments increase, so does the cost for attending college. College and universities have to ensure that their respective programs are meeting the needs of society and that they are producing students with the ability to think critically, provide complex reasoning, and write effectively.

Conclusion

The findings from this study will serve as a foundation to understand the perception of participation in pre-college programs on African-American men who have completed their freshmen year of college. This particular topic will be useful for parents, students, high school administrators, colleges and universities admissions officers, and other administrators making decisions regarding the design of their pre-college program offerings or the development of

student support services that support underrepresented students once these students arrive at college.

This study will be presented in five chapters. Chapter One introduces the background of the study, the research questions, and the overall significance of the study. Chapter Two will provide a literature review of the relevant information available regarding this topic. Chapter Three will provide the methodology for this particular study which includes the chosen populations, sample size, and procedures used in order to collect, interpret, and analyze collected data. Chapter Four will describe the findings based upon the collected data, and the final chapter will provide a discussion of the results and the implications for future uses and recommendation for additional research in order to future expand the implications.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“In this other America, thousands of young people are deprived of an opportunity to get an adequate education. Every year, thousands finish high school reading at a 7th, 8th, and sometimes 9th grade reading level. Not because they’re dumb. Not because they do not have native intelligence. But, because the schools are so inadequate, so over-crowded, so devoid of quality, so segregated – if you will – that the best of these minds never come out.” (King, 1967)

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs. The focus will be on African-American men whom have completed their first year of college. The following research questions will be explored:

1. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their choice of pursuing a post-secondary education?
2. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their first year college experience?
3. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their academic interactions on campus?

This chapter is organized into five sections, including 1) an examination of the journey to educational equity, 2) an exploration of the goals of higher education, 3) a focus on pre-college

programs, and 4) a discussion of the path to the bachelor's degree. The chapter then presents the conceptual framework used for this dissertation.

Journey for Educational Equality

In order to understand the experiences of African-American male students in pre-college preparatory programs, one must understand the underrepresented student's journey towards positive educational outcomes and the challenge for educational equality, starting with *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 1896 United States Supreme Court Ruling that provided the legal precedent allowing states to keep their respective public academic institutions segregated on the basis of race. This ruling also served as a barrier for the equal allocation of educational resources such as facilities, textbooks, and highly trained teachers for African-American students.

During the time span from 1896 to 1947, many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were formed with the sole purpose of providing higher educational opportunities for African-Americans. Many of these HBCUs were private and received funding from various religious and philanthropic organizations, while a select few received federal funding, but not at equal levels as predominately white institutions (PWI). As a result, these HBCUs were unable to provide quality educational opportunities due to their limited resources and inadequate facilities. HBCUs educated students whose future job opportunities were limited, given the social climate of the time (Anderson, 1988).

In July of 1946, President Harry Truman appointed a higher education commission known as the Truman Commission. During this time the United States was transitioning from a country at war to one at peace. The goal of the Truman Commission was to explore the future

role of the United States in global affairs. The Truman Commission created, arguably for the first time, engaged dialogue and national rhetoric on higher education seeking to eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, particularly for those students who were defined as “Negro” and suffered from segregated educational systems that existed in most states (Hutcheson, 2002).

At the time of the commission’s report in 1947, African Americans comprised only ten % of the United States total population, accounting for 3 % of college enrollments. Of the 3 % of African American students that were enrolled in college, 85 % of them attended segregated institutions (Truman Commission Report 1947, Vol. II, p. 31).

In 1947, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 that integrated the United States Armed Forces and providing additional opportunities for African-Americans to serve in positions previously denied to them. President Truman realized that equal opportunity for all persons, to the maximum of their individual abilities, without regard to economic status, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or ancestry was a major goal of the American democracy. Truman further added that “Only an informed, thoughtful, tolerant people can develop and maintain a free society” (President Commission on Higher Education, 1947). The establishment of the Truman Commission and the integration of the Armed Forces would set the stage for previous Supreme Court rulings using the equal protection clause, as stated in the Fourteenth Amendment, as the primary defense seeking and establishing diversity at traditional colleges and universities, particularly in the Southern U.S. for African-Americans.

The Goals of Higher Education

The American higher education system has traditionally served as a symbol of learning and prestige since the beginnings of Harvard University, the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States in 1731. Institutions, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton became early leaders in higher education, providing educational opportunities for white male citizens and preparing them to assume leadership roles in society (Karabel, 2005). These institutions have evolved over time in terms of the prestige, architecture, and stakeholder demographic of each respective campus, but as Thelin asserts, institutional saga plays an important and foundational role in the overall understanding of the colleges and university experiences (Thelin, 2004).

If an observer were to ask the question about the overall goal of higher education, a variety of responses are likely. According to Bloom, the goal of higher education is to provide students the necessary tools that will allow them to live morally good and successful lives. These learning tools focus on the use of Western books such as *Plato's Republic*, which Bloom believed provided a realistic view of what real education and curricula should look like (Bloom, 1987). Bloom felt that these Western works provided a solid framework for learning regardless of a student's race or ethnicity, and studying these works provides students a framework for the development of critical thinking skills and solid moral values (Bloom, 1987).

Other scholars, however, disagree with this assessment. Levine, on the other hand, felt that universities should place more emphasis on diversity and less emphasis on the Western thoughts of earlier philosophers such as Plato, Socrates, and Rousseau in their curriculum. Levine also believed that universities have to be more open-minded in providing education reflecting a diverse society (Levine, 1997). One way colleges and universities can provide

education that reflects diversity within contemporary society is with intentional and differential use of institutional resources, including those directed towards students who may not have access to postsecondary education. Doing so affords equal opportunities for students to pursue a postsecondary degree.

Higher Education's Golden Age 1945-1970. In John Thelin's book entitled *A History of American Higher Education*, he defines 1945 through 1970 as "Higher Education's Golden Age." During this timeframe, Thelin makes reference to a concept called horizontal history, which views the overall higher educational system from three distinct aspects: system, policy and external influences (Thelin, 2004). This horizontal concept expounded on topics such as access, funding, and expanded opportunities to a wider student base. This horizontal concept also led to the expansion of financial aid systems, student access, and admissions standards across the entire higher educational system, instead of focusing on a select few institutions. Finally, the horizontal concept addressed how more students would have the opportunity to attend college, and the ability to receive funding from a variety of sources benefitting the entire college and university system as a whole. This would now allow each respective institution the opportunity to obtain additional funding through research grants, state funding, and the implementation of intercollegiate athletics.

Higher education was transformed during this period almost by accident. During this period World War II was ending and the post-World-War II era saw increased enrollments at colleges and universities due to the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly referred to as the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill expanded access to colleges for numerous veterans, including African Americans. This landmark legislation marked the beginning of the federal government's intervention in higher education through policy and funding (Thelin, 2004). However for

African-Americans, their access to higher education was still limited primarily to a select few public HBCUs and a very limited amount of PWIs. African-Americans were still underrepresented on most college campuses, and were continually denied admissions solely on the basis of race, a violation of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Landmark Federal Cases. *Sweat v. Painter* was one of the first landmark United States Supreme Court cases challenging race-conscious admissions patterns for African-American students and began the discussion regarding racial diversity as a compelling component of effective higher education. In 1946, Herman Marion Sweatt, a well-educated black student, was denied admission to the University of Texas Law School for one reason: “the fact that he was black.” According to law in the State of Texas, the University of Texas was forbidden to consider any other education and background qualities. Mr. Sweatt was indeed qualified to gain admission to the University of Texas Law School, but he was denied solely on the fact that he was a Negro (Letter from Theophilus Painter to Grover Sellers, Feb. 26, 1946 quoted in Brown). With the “separate but equal” concept from the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case still being considered the law of the land, the chances for African-Americans attending most of the nation’s colleges and universities outside of HBCU’s were limited.

Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954) is considered the ultimate educational landmark United States Supreme Court case stating separate schools segregated on the basis of race was unconstitutional and ordering the integrating of all public schools. The *Brown* case, primarily focused on the integration of public schools, would ultimately apply to the higher education systems as well. This case centered on the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment, and ultimately led to the reversal of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, previously and legally

allowing schools to remain segregated on the basis of race, and creating disparate impact which favors one group over another.

The Starting Line: Pre-College programs

Federal pre-college programs evolved from the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965, which became federal law on November 8, 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's domestic agenda, termed the Great Society. The Higher Education Act of 1965 expanded access to higher education, provided financial aid programs, and established campus based support services aimed at assisting underrepresented students once they arrived on college campus (McDonough & Fann, 2007). These campus based support programs also included pre-college programs known as TRIO (Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and Student Support Services), which were designed to provide additional resources for low-income and first generation students. The goal of TRIO programs is to provide additional assistance and support to first generation, disadvantaged and low-income students who display the potential to pursue a post-secondary education after high school graduation.

These additional resources supplement the high school experience, especially at schools that lack strong academic programs to prepare students for a college curriculum; these programs also provide information and available resources to prepare students for college enrollment (Perna, 2002). These early pre-college programs increased the amount of federal dollars provided to universities by the federal government, created additional scholarships, provided low-interest loans for students, and established a National Teachers Corps. The Higher Education Act of 1965

served as starting point in increasing college enrollments for underrepresented students, and began bridging gaps for educational improvements.

Established as a part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the primary focus of the Educational Talent Search Program was to provide supplemental assistance to low-income and first generation college students. The Educational Talent Search program expanded college access with ACT/SAT preparation, and provided financial aid information for grants, loans, scholarships, and related information to navigate the college application process. Since 1965, the Talent Search program has grown and has provided services to over 320,000 students at an average cost of \$313 per student (Talent Search Program, 2004). Despite these numerous attempts by the federal government to expand college access, educational achievement gaps continue to exist, especially among low-income students as well as African American, Latino, and American Indian students (Swail with Redd and Perna, 2003).

These programs have their historical basis in affirmative action efforts. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law on July 2, 1964, provided legal enforcement to both this law and the previous *Brown* decision in public higher education. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided additional opportunities for African American and other racial minority students whom historically had been underrepresented in the pursuit of postsecondary education. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance, which now included colleges and universities. Title VII of the Civil Rights act states that: No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The key aspects of this legislation centered on

entities that were receiving federal funding. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ultimately led to the establishment of Affirmative Action programs that were aimed at correcting past wrongs of discrimination towards African-Americans and ensuring that all races, gender and ethnicities were to be equally protected.

Pre-College Programs in Today's Higher Educational Landscape. Higher education administrators today are constantly dealing with increased pressures and demands from external environments, such as federal and local legislatures, board of trustees, industry, alumni and even parents. In addition, administrators must also deal with their internal environments on issues such as tenure for faculty and staff, and the administration of their respective academic programs. As a result, higher education administrators have to ensure that their respective organizational strategies both offer and deliver academic programs that provide their students with the proper required skills enabling them to become successful and productive members within the ever changing external environment while at the same time carefully monitoring these programs to ensure that overall success is achieved for all students, which includes those that may lack pre-requisite skills that are needed prior to entering college. So how does administrators ensure that their respective organizations operate smoothly and efficiently?

As higher education continues to undergo changes with emphasis on increasing overall student completion rates, for underrepresented students such as African-American males this has now become a critical point of emphasis. Higher educational organizations are becoming more complex and diverse, and with over 4,300 institutions, continually have to change and adapt, perhaps more today than any previous time in their histories (Bess and Dee, 2008). As the higher education climate continues to change, administrators are constantly looking at their current

institutional strategies to access how their institution is performing or underperforming in regard to their admissions procedures, diversity and overall completion rates.

For those colleges and universities that are underperforming, many will have to either: (1) modify their current strategies or (2) develop totally new strategies depending upon the marketplace (external environment) and consumer demands (both industry and students), due to the constant challenges of globalization, new technologies, industry restructuring, increased competition and the myriad of other pressures. One critical challenge is illustrated in a 2010 study that concluded that only 47 % of African-American males are graduating on time from high school; African-American males comprise 7.9 % of the total population within the 18-24 year olds, and they represent 2.9 % of the undergraduates at public flagship colleges and universities (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010). Despite the fact that many programs and resources exist for all students to enter college, for African-American males, access to college and attaining a college degree continues to be a challenge (Thomas & Perna, 2004).

In order for colleges and universities to be successful in creating a supportive educational environment for all students, administrators must work with underrepresented students to prepare them for admission to their respective campuses. In previous years, administrators concentrated on admissions procedures as a way to do this—performing, planning, directing, organizing and controlling functions directly impacting how decisions were made to include the admissions process. So how does college administrators today address the fact that according to the United States Department of Education the overall college graduation rate for African-American males is 33.1 % as compared to 54.5 % for white males (U.S. Department of Education, 2004)?

Pre-College Programs as a Strategy. One way to look at how a typical college and university can tackle the problem of increasing their overall completion rates among African-

American males is by carefully looking at their current recruiting and retention strategies, understand how they are performing, addressing environmental expectations, and seeking additional resources that support pre-college programs which will enable improvement. Within today's higher education operating environment, many colleges and universities are undergoing constant change, requiring specialized teams with expanded roles that allows administrators, faculty, and specialty managers to utilize them to delegate, define, gather information, solve problems, and make decisions that previously was done by a select few or even one individual (Robbins, 2005).

The adaptive strategy model allows organizations to continually engage in both internal adjustments and modifications, while simultaneously responding to changes in the external environment (Bess & Dee, 2008). George Keller, an early proponent of the adaptive model, viewed this model as a foundation for universities allowing them to operate more like businesses instead of organizations (Bess & Dee, 2008). Due to the competitive and operational landscape of today's higher education organizations, each of the more than 4,300 institutions are complex, diverse, and constantly require adaptation to external environments in order to maintain, or even survive. Survival simply means that higher education organizations must create and maintain competitive advantages within the educational marketplace. The adaptive model allows the organization to rapidly respond to the external environment by making changes that allows the organization to maintain or improve on their competitive advantages. In order to respond to these changes, higher education administrators have to look at components of uncertainty. According to Milliken (1990) three types of uncertainty exist: 1) state uncertainty, (2) effect uncertainty, and 3) response uncertainty. These types mean that organizations have to determine

what the situation is, how the situation will impact them, how the organization will respond, and what options are available to them (Bess & Dee, 2008).

The effect uncertainty for African-American students continues to show that the overall percentage of students from higher socioeconomic households enrolled in Bachelor's programs continually outranks those from lower socioeconomic households (60 vs. 12 %) (Kena, Hussar, McFarland, de Brey, Musu-Gillette, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, Diliberti, Barmer, Bullock, and Dunlop, 2016). Many African-American students are from lower socio-economic households, and continuously face obstacles preventing them from closing the educational gaps that still exist.

In order to understand the experiences of African-American men that participated in pre-college programs, one must determine how pre-college program participation has led to increases in the overall number of African-American men attending college, and how many of them actually graduate from college. Upward bound, one of the three original TRIO programs, receives the most attention regarding measuring effectiveness, and has the largest amount of research studies. The Educational Talent Search program lacks substantial amounts of research measuring the overall effectiveness of the Educational Talent Search program and their perceptions on African-American Male students.

In a 2006 Talent Search Report, findings indicated students who participated in Talent Search were first-time applicants for financial aid, enrolled in a public college or university within their home state, and enrolled in both two-year and four-year institutions at higher rates compared to those that did not participate in programs (Talent Search Fact Sheet, 2016). This report did not provide any significant findings leading to a clear determination regarding college enrollment choices between two- or four-year institutions. As indicated previously, numerous

research studies conclude that many barriers exist preventing many underrepresented students from attending college such as lower socioeconomic status, lack of financial resources, access to critical information, strict academic curriculum in high school, and educational level of their parents. Underrepresented students whose parents possess a bachelor's degree are more likely to enroll in college immediately after high school.

Purpose of Student Support Services (SSS). Each SSS program is administered by the awarding of grants over a five year cycle. The grants covers salaries for staff members who administer the programs, current and prospective employee training, program cost. Grants are awarded based on the number of first generation, disadvantaged and low-income students each program supports. Each post-secondary institution submits their proposals for various types of grants such as regular, disability, English as a Second Language (ESL), Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and Teacher Preparation grants are awarded (SSS Fact Sheet, 2016). During each reporting period, September to August, each grantee must submit an Annual Performance Report or APR to the Department of Education, which show how each program is performing and indicates academic progress for each institution. According to the 2013-2014 Annual Performance Reporting Data, the US Department of Education awarded a total of 949 regular grants totaling 259 million dollars, 36 disabilities grants totaling 8.4 million dollars, 20 STEM grants totaling 4.0 million dollars, 7 ESL grants totaling 1.5 million dollars, 6 health sciences grants totaling 1.1 million dollars and 6 teacher preparation grants totaling 1.2 million dollars (US DOE Funds Projects Database, 2013-14).

These programs seek to help students gain an effective understanding of what college will be like. Many first-generation college students have unclear expectations regarding the overall college experience, including navigating the physical campus, knowing how to study, and

being able to interact with faculty (Levine & Cureton, 1998; McCarthy & Kuh, 2006; Marchese, 1997, 1998; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005). Unclear expectations are one reason why many first generation college students experience expectation gaps between what they expect college to be like prior to arriving as compared to what they actually experienced after they arrive (Braxton, Vesper, & Hossler, 1995). Additional evidence also exists indicating that student performance during the first year of college further creates expectation gaps in other areas (Kuh, 1999; Kuh, Gonyea, & Williams, 2005; Olsen and others, 1998). Schilling and Schilling (1999) conclude from their analysis of College Student Expectations Questionnaire that several students arrive at college with lower educational expectations, which differs from faculty expectations in terms of attitudes, study habits, and academic skills.

The Path to the Bachelor's Degree

A bachelor's degree has become a requirement for entry into the many growing number of professions. Many parents begin to plan for their children's college expenses as soon as they are born, but many African-Americans are not afforded that luxury due to their lower socioeconomic status. Black men are twice as likely to be unemployed compared to White men. Black men, on average, earn 75 % of what White men earn for comparable work. Black men are also seven times more likely than Whites to be incarcerated and they tend to receive jail sentences that are about 10 months longer than their White male counterparts. Only 43 % of Black men who enter ninth grade leave with a regular diploma within four years, the lowest high school graduation rate among both sexes and all races. Even those Black men who complete high school are significantly less likely than their non-Black peers to enroll in college ultimately

earning a college degree (Strayhorn, 2008). As college enrollments continue to rise, so has the cost for attending.

Lack of Formal Mentoring. Another factor contributing to the reasons why so many African-American males are not completing college as compared to White males is the lack of formal mentoring. Some African-American males tend to view sports figures as being role models, but many studies have emphasized the importance of mentoring on African-American males, especially at the high school and college levels through counseling (Toldson, 2008). Once African-American males arrive on a college campus, the mentorship role becomes extremely important in their overall success. The focus of mentoring now shifts from a parental encouragement type towards a more advisory and developmental one with the establishment of academic goals (Sutton, 2006).

Formal studies have indicated a positive correlation between those college students that engage with faculty both in class and outside of class as compared to those who do not. For African-American students, this positive engagement leads a greater sense of belonging leading to higher graduation rates at PWIs (Himelhoch, Nichols, Ball, & Black, 1997). During secondary educational years, African-American males look to their parents, a teacher or guidance counselors for advice and guidance regarding college attendance. Parental involvement during their secondary years plays a significant role for African-American males, especially if their parents attended college themselves. Studies have indicated that African-American males who participate in on campus Student Support Services (SSS) programs are more than likely to remain in college and obtain a degree as compared to those that do not (SSS Persistence, 2015).

Lack of Academic Preparation. Studies indicate that many students, including African-American males, enter into the college pipeline unprepared and not fully exposed to the

challenges of a typical college curriculum during their secondary years. (Fenske, Geranios & Moore, 1997; Perna, 2002; Gandara, Larson, Mehan & Rumberger, 1998). Many African-American males attend high schools within communities with other underrepresented students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Some high schools that serve this population lack a rigorous academic curriculum, and do not have advanced mathematics and science courses that challenge students' critical thinking ability (Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003). Additionally, for students that successfully complete a high school curriculum, many of them enter college lacking the ability to write, and analyze facts and figures critically (Bok, 2006). Previous research also indicates that a positive correlation exists between student's ability to think critically and those that have been exposed to diverse experiences (Hurtado, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Lack of Access. Access to a quality education can be difficult for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who begin their educational journey without critical resources such as books, learning resources, and even computers that will prepare them for academic success (Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). For African-Americans men and women, 33 % of students come from families with annual household incomes less than \$30,000 per year (American College Testing Program, 2006). Lack of access to educational resources, especially in terms of financial support, is one primary reason that African-American males choose not to enroll into college at similar rates to their white male counterparts.

With statistics such as these, colleges and universities are challenged to respond to the growing demands regarding the enrollment of African-American men (Carter & Wilson, 1997; Social Science Research Council Project, 2005). Access is not only limited to being denied college admission, but encompasses areas such as access to knowledge of critical information, including knowledge of the overall college admissions process.

Research findings indicate that equitable access to high-performing public educational systems can break down barriers to success, altering the futures for many traditionally underrepresented students. Providing all students a fair and substantive opportunity to learn are critical goals for systemic education reform, transformative innovation, consistent progress, increased participation in our democratic society and global leadership in a knowledge-based economy. In order to achieve our country's higher educational goals, our current educational system must continue to focus on increasing post-secondary educational opportunities for all underrepresented students, especially African-American male students who are currently concentrated in schools and classrooms with limited educational opportunities for their success (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010).

Over the past decade, college enrollments have increased for African-American males at both two year colleges and lower cost institutions with less strict admission requirements (Thomas & Perna, 2004). In 2015, 36 % of 25- to 29-year-olds had attained a bachelor's or higher degree, but the percentage of White students within the same age group attaining a bachelor's degree or higher also increased during the time period from 1995 to 2015. The gaps between White versus Black students who attained a bachelor's or higher degree widened from 13 to 22 %, with the gap between White versus Hispanic students widening from 20 to 27% (Kena, Hussar, McFarland, de Brey, Musu-Gillette, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, Diliberti, Barmer, Bullock, and Dunlop, 2016).

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the critical part for any research study as it provides the researcher a visual road map in order to navigate, connect relationships, and provides direction for the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) define the conceptual framework as a visual or written product, one that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, key factors, concepts, variables and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18). The conceptual framework used to guide this study in order to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs was from John Weidman’s Undergraduate Socialization Model. Weidman’s undergraduate socialization stems from the understanding of socialization as a process that allows individuals to obtain a degree of knowledge and develop skill sets that allowing them to be more productive members of society (Brinn, 1966, p.3). This model focuses on four distinct points, (1) student background characteristics, (2) parental socialization, (3) collegiate experiences, and (4) non-college reference groups (Weidman, 1984). However, the researcher will not conduct any research in this study on point four of this model, non-collegiate reference groups. Research for this study will focus only on three distinct points of this model, (1) student background characteristics, (2) parental socialization, and (3) collegiate experiences. Part of the socialization process stems from student background characteristics. The collegiate journey for African-American males can be marked with a series of hurdles, including a lack of access to critical information, lack of financial resources, lack of formal mentoring and a lack of academic preparation. These aspects along with others have led to significant educational achievement gaps.

Figure 1: Weidman's Model of Undergraduate Socialization

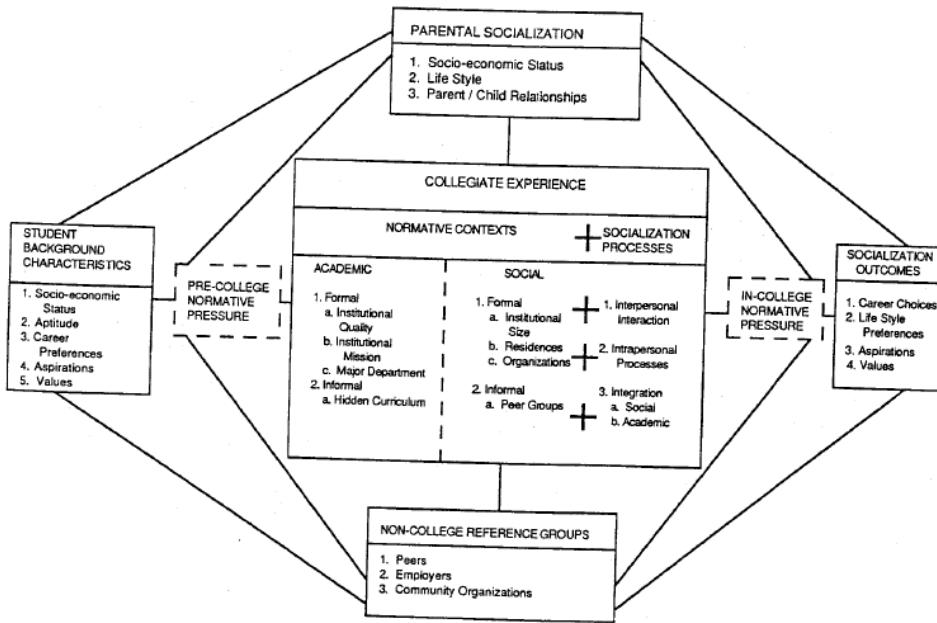


FIGURE 1. A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF UNDERGRADUATE SOCIALIZATION

The journey for post-secondary education for African-American males are often marked by a series of challenges stemming from legal, financial and a lack of academic preparation. The results of this study will be analyzed in Chapter 4 using a four phased 400 meter relay race as a metaphor in order to illustrate the four main points of Weidman's Undergraduate Socialization Framework using a phase 1, 2, and 3 format. The Figure 2 below depicts The Educational Race further illustrated in a circular format, which represents a race track. This educational race track is further illustrated using three main points, (1) student background characteristics, (2) parental socialization, and (3) collegiate experiences of the framework used to guide this study

(Weidman, 1984). Each main point represents a turn and marks the beginning of each phase as previously mentioned in Chapter 2.

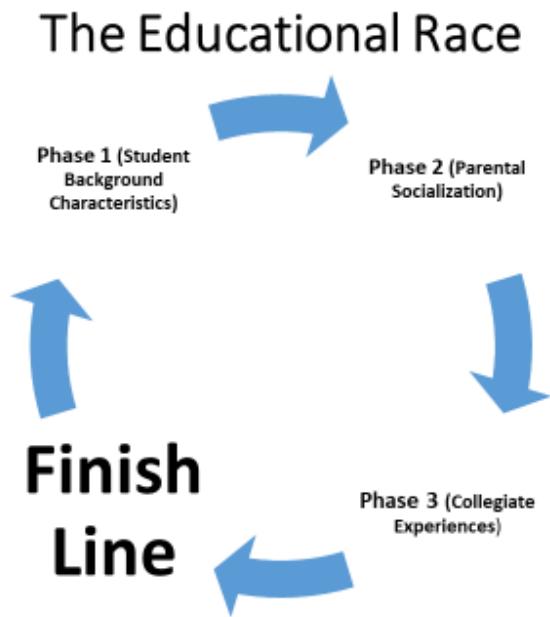


Figure 2: The Educational Race

In order to add some additional depth to this analysis, terms such as a running race, preparation, stadium entry, starting line, and finish line will be used to visually (Figure 3) depict the metaphor of a race/journey in which *all* college students must navigate in order to obtain a college degree. Figure 3 further illustrates each step overlapping the race/journey. The word *race*, in this analysis, is used as a metaphor referring to the actual journey itself or pursuit of a college education. *Preparation* represents the actions during the high school years in which all aspiring college students must undertake to gain acceptance to college. *Stadium entry* refers to the specific stadium (college or university) where the actual race occurs. The *starting line* refers to specific point where the race begins, the first day of college. The final term *finish line*, refers

to the goal/outcome of actually crossing the *finish line* (graduation) within six years. The key findings were told by each individual runner (student) sharing their own individual stories, within each phase, about regarding their journey.

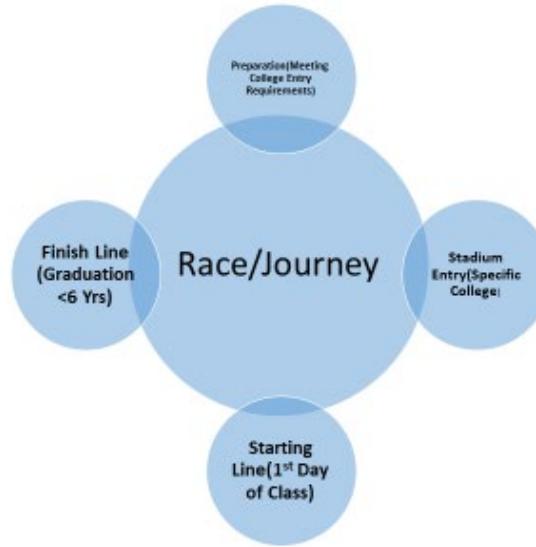


Figure 3: The Educational Journey

First, before arriving at the starting line, each individual runner has to first meet specific qualifications in order to proceed to the starting line. The first qualification is first gaining entry into the stadium. Gaining entry is filled with significant challenges in itself. Preparing for any race requires long hours of practice, conditioning, and prior preparation to meet the qualifications. For all college students in order to proceed to begin their post-educational journey, one must first gain entry into college by meeting specific qualifications such as a satisfactory Grade Point Average (GPA), financial aid and minimum ACT/SAT scores. For African-American students meeting the qualification for college is a long and winding road and for African-American males, the road is even longer. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1,

African-American male students pursue postsecondary education at a disproportionately low numbers compared to other student groups, and two-thirds of African-American men who start college fail to complete their studies within six years (Harper & Harris, 2012).

Chapter Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to provide a literature review of the relevant information available regarding the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs, how participation in pre-college programs shaped their decisions to pursue a post-secondary education, and benefits gained from their participation. The following chapter will discuss the selected research methodology and design, the selection process of participants, and the materials and instruments to be used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs. The focus will be on African-American men who have completed their first year of college. Based on a 2010 study, only 47 % of African-American males graduate on time from high school (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010). African-American males comprise 7.9 % of the total population within the 18-24 year olds, but only represent 2.9 % of undergraduate students enrolled at public flagship colleges and universities.

Previous research has shown that students who participate in pre-college programs accrue significant benefits compared to peers who do not participate (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini (2004). Some individual benefits for participating in pre-college programs include increased parental involvement and increased homework completion during the years of secondary education (Perna & Swail (2001). Further, numerous colleges and universities have seen overall increases in the number of African-American males being admitted and ultimately completing a program of study (Edwards, 2010). These increases have also resulted in additional funding sources through additional tuition, scholarship and federal funding opportunities (Edwards, 2010). One of the areas in which colleges and universities can seek to enhance their educational goals is through the use, implementation, and support of pre-college programs to

provide additional resources that will benefit all underrepresented students, most importantly African-American males.

With this study, a basic qualitative research approach used structured interviews with program participants and administrators offered insight to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs (Creswell, 2009).

The overall research purpose and questions should drive the research design and method: either qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both (Creswell, 2009). According to Durbin (2004), research questions come from a desire to question, evaluate and investigate. The research questions will determine factors such as the sample size and population needed to conduct the research (Durbin, 2004). This study used single individual semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009), to understand how pre-college programs prepared participants for college as well as the first-year participant experience.

The three research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their choice of pursuing a post-secondary education?
2. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their first year college experience?
3. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their academic interactions on campus?

Pre-college programs such as Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Student Support Services can motivate African-American males to enhance their academic preparation while in high school; therefore increasing their chances of being successfully admitted to a postsecondary program of study and increasing the likelihood of completing an undergraduate degree (Rolland, 2011) Primary data collection for this study was single individual semi-

structured interviews with African-American male students who participated in a pre-college program. Supplemental interviews were also conducted with administrators who currently work or had past experience working with TRIO programs to provide additional insights regarding student experiences.

Research Approach

Research is an organized, systematic investigation, the purpose of which is to find answers to important and interesting questions by testing ideas (Baker, 2006). This intellectual investigation produces enhanced knowledge of events, behaviors, theories, and laws and makes practical applications possible (Baker, 2006). Research enables the discovery of new facts, the development of new theories, the revision of accepted theories in light of new facts, and the development of practical applications for new information that is taught (Baker, 2006).

Research studies commonly stem from two types of traditions, either quantitative or qualitative (Creswell, 2003). Differences exist between quantitative and qualitative data analysis; first of all, in qualitative studies, the researcher tends to be more closely connected to the study as the instrument for data collection, while in quantitative studies, the researcher is separated from the study (Creswell, 2003). Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson (1996) define qualitative data analysis as the range of processes and procedures, in which qualitative data is analysed into order to explain, understand or interpret people and current situations of investigation. Qualitative designs are used in: (1) case studies; (2) ethnography; (3) phenomenology; (4) grounded theory; and (5) content analysis (Creswell, 2009). Strengths of qualitative methods include the following: (1) allows the researcher to deeply explore the

processes, (2) appropriate for research on little-known phenomena, (3) explores where and why certain theories are at odds (4) permits research efforts on informal and linkages and processes in organizations; and (5) permits research on real vs. stated organizational goals (Marshall & Rossman, 2015).

Methodology Summary

After applying for and receiving IRB approval, the data collection process began on June 1, 2019 by contacting the two SSS directors from the approved sites in order to obtain a listing of students within their current SSS program that (1) participated in a pre-college program prior to arriving at college (2) had completed their freshmen year of college, and (3) were currently participating in SSS. The researcher contacted each site requesting 15 African-American male students and five administrators from each site, totaling 30 students and 10 administrators. The researcher contacted each site by e-mail, receiving confirmed responses from three students and three administrators. A total of six semi-structured one on one interviews were conducted between July 1-14, 2019, with both African-American male students who (1) participated in a pre-college program prior to arriving at college (2) who completed their freshmen year of college, and (3) were currently participating in SSS and with college administrators who had directly worked or supported TRIO programs previously at a post-secondary institution. Each student was asked 12 open-ended questions (Appendix A) and each college administrator was asked 14 open-ended questions (Appendix B). Both students and administrators were provided a copy of the Approved IRB template which provided an overview of the study and a consent form (Appendix C) which outlined the purpose of this basic qualitative study: to understand the

perceptions which these African American males had of the pre-college programs in which they had participated during their first year of college.

Design of the study

For this particular study, qualitative research methodologies through the use of single individual semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2009) were used in order to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs. The intended goal of this qualitative research study was to provide insights regarding the experiences of African-American men after their first year of college and the role of pre-college programs in those experiences. Two institutional types were targeted for this study. One institutional type was a public, non-residential four year, Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) dominant university, with high graduate levels, very high research activity and numerous doctoral programs. The second institutional type targeted for this study was a public, non-residential four year, Medical/Dental dominant university, with high graduate levels, very high research activity and numerous doctoral programs.

The interviews were conducted at two separate site locations, hereafter referred to as Young University and Fast Rising University. According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning, Young University is a public four year university, located in an urban city, classified as large, primarily non-residential with less than 25% of degree seeking undergraduates living on campus, with a total student population of 20,902, with the majority of students classified as undergraduates. Young University is also classified as a Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) dominant Doctoral University, in which a

minimum of 20 research/doctoral degrees were conferred during the preceding year, as well as a university with very high research activity (Carnegie, 2019).

According to Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning, Fast Rising University is a public four year university located in a large city and classified as large, primarily non-residential with less than 25% of degree seeking undergraduates living on campus. Fast Rising University has a total student population of 43,540, with the majority of their students classified as undergraduates. According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), African-American student enrollment at Fast Rising, represent 10% of the total student population, with 1,712 of these are African-American males students. African-American SSS students at Fast Rising University have a 6 year graduation rate of 73% (IPEDS, 2018).

Fast Rising University is also classified as an Research Doctoral University in which a minimum of 20 research/doctoral degrees were conferred during the preceding year and contains both a medical and veterinary school, with very high research activity (Carnegie, 2019).

According to Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning, Young University is a public four year university located in a large city and classified as a mid-size, primarily non-residential with less than 25% of degree seeking undergraduates living on campus. According to Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) the National Center of Education Statistics, African-American student enrollment at Young University, represents 21% of the total student population, with 1,366 are African-American male students. African-American SSS students at Young University have a 6 year graduation rate of 53% (IPEDS, 2018).

The overall African-American student enrollment represents less than 25% of the total student population at both universities used in this study (IPEDS, 2018). Based on the low overall enrollment percentage of African-American students, SSS programs at large to mid-sized

4 year public, doctoral and STEM dominated universities with high research activity are facing significant challenges in recruiting and maintaining a high number of African-American males to participate in campus SSS programs.

According to Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning (2019) Fast Rising University is a public four year university located in a large city and classified as large, primarily non-residential with less than 25% of degree seeking undergraduates living on campus, with a total student population of 43,540, with the majority of students classified as undergraduates. Fast Rising University is also classified as an Research Doctoral University in which a minimum of 20 research/doctoral degrees were conferred during the preceding year and contains both a medical and veterinary school with very high research activity (Carnegie, 2019). Students and program administrators were recruited by consulting with the Student Support Services (SSS) programs at both Young and Fast Rising University as well as by snowball recruiting (Miles & Huberman, 1994) within the researcher's professional network. The study proceeded the SSS administrators provide the researcher names of students willing to participate in this study. The researcher was not aware of the actual selection criteria used by the SSS administrators to determine which students each SSS administrator contacted, which represents a delimitation previously identified in the limitations section. The researcher provided each SSS administrator two selection criteria for student participants, 1) each student must currently participate in SSS, and 2) each student must have participated in a pre-college program prior to college enrollment. The researcher informed the identified participants via email about the interview date, location, and time. Follow-up recruitment emails were sent and program administrators also sent out emails about the study.

These semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded in order to determine primary themes. During these interviews data about the selected African-American male pre-college program participants were obtained. The data were specifically related to how the participants experiences the precollege programs. The participants for this study consisted of three TRIO program administrators and three African-American males who had completed their first year of college regardless of age. The total number of six interview participants fell short of the original intended study goal. The total number was impacted by logistical and timing issues related to data collection. Since TRIO programs are funded over a five year cycle, many SSS administrators may be simply unwilling to provide individual students list and specific information regarding their program during a reporting cycle. Upon completion of the current five year grant reporting cycle (2013-2018), every TRIO program is required by Federal Law to provide a comprehensive report summarizing their programs.

The participants were identified and selected in accordance with the purpose of the overall study: to understand the experiences of African-American male students who participated in pre-college programs. Appropriate IRB approval was obtained before data collection commenced. Each participant was provided with an informed consent form in which they were asked to read, sign, and return. Each participant was also informed prior to the interview that their participation in this study was voluntary and both administrators and students were given the option to discontinue at any time. The selected participants were not compensated in any way during this study and neither their names nor any personal identifiable information were revealed in order to protect both the individual's privacy as well as the privacy of the institutions of the selected participants. Students were also reminded that their decision to participate in the study had no impact, positive or negative, on their course grades or academic standing.

In order to provide additional analysis, Administrator interviews were used as supplemental interviews to provide additional insight regarding the student experiences at Young University, which is a mid-sized public four year STEM Dominant University with a high research activity. Fast Rising University is a large public four-year Doctoral University with a very High Research Activity. The researcher also used the National Center for Education Statistics, the Department of Education TRIO Websites as secondary data sources in order to validate the student interviews.

Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) outline three phases of qualitative data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data displays, whether in word or diagrammatic form, allow the researcher to extract from the data and begin looking for systematic patterns and interrelationships. Within the display stage additional higher order categories or themes may emerge from the data that go beyond those first discovered during the initial process of data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to interpret qualitative data, many methods exist but one method to analyze this type of data would be to develop flow charts and create pictures to illustrate data flow.

There were a variety of models, theories, and conceptual frameworks that could be used to study the perception of pre-college programs on African-American males. Theories such as the Student Engagement and Student Development theories attempt to address some of the

underlying reasons for African-American males not entering college or completing once they arrive. As previously discussed in Chapter one, African-American males are one of the most underserved and underrepresented groups on college campuses today (Harper 2012). Factors include lack of financial aid, lack of adequate information regarding college admissions, and inadequate prior academic preparation at the secondary level (USDOE/Spellings Report 2006).

Weidman's model of undergraduate socialization (Figure 1) was chosen as the conceptual framework guiding this study and focuses on three distinct points, (1) student background characteristics, (2) parental socialization, and (3) collegiate experiences (Weidman, 1984).

Limitations of the study

Conducting any study will always present limitations that could impact the intended direction. This research study sought to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs. The study did not attempt to seek responses from students and administrators from other institutional types, such as private- not-for profit, community colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Another limitation was the small sample size. Three participants prevent any type of “generalizing” of the findings of the study. Instead, the findings of the study should be interpreted in a more modest fashion. Qualitative research is more accustomed to using the term “transferability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As such, the findings of this study may be transferrable to any institution, student, faculty, or administrator who might find themselves in similar circumstances.

Delimitations of the study

This study was delimited to two regional universities, one located in central Alabama and the other located in southwest Florida. The study was further delimited to three students who had completed their first year of college. This study was further delimited to three Student Support Program administrators, two located in southwest Florida and one in Central Alabama.

Ethical Considerations

Pre-college program experiences for all students are of interest to the United States economic status, respective colleges and universities, lending institutions, parents, and students. Pre-college program experiences can provide some insight into why African-American males are not entering into and completing post-secondary education in higher numbers. In order to ensure that ethical standards were maintained during the course of this study, each participants was informed about the purpose of the study, and an informed consent form was obtained from each participant before pursuing the study. Second, the privacy and confidentiality of the selected participants was treated as a high priority. This emphasis included not revealing any individual names or any personally identifiable information to any outside sources. Measures were undertaken to further protect the participants from any undue harm; participants were given the opportunity to decline to answer any question if they were not inclined, to remove themselves from the study at any time without penalty, and to address any and all concerns prior to the interview process. The participants were informed via email regarding the actual date of the interview along with the time; all the interviews were conducted by either phone or Skype. Data

were collected during the interview by use of a digital tape recorder with the participant's permission. Data were reviewed after each interview, transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted into themes. All collected data were made available for review by the respective participants.

Trustworthiness

This study incorporated the following strategies as a measure to increase the trustworthiness of the study and mitigate any bias within the overall findings. Four strategies were used in this study. The first strategy was the positionality statement of the researcher. The purpose of the positionality statement was to provide clarification of the researcher's interest in the topic and identify any potential biases the researcher might have brought to the study (Charmaz, 2014). The positionality statement also allowed readers of the research to determine what level credibility to attach to the research findings.

The second strategy used in the research was administrator analysis. In administrator analysis the researcher interviewed SSS administrators to add additional insight to the student structured interviews and the methodological procedures which produced those findings (Merriam, 2009). The administrator interviews added credibility to the findings and enhanced the overall trustworthiness of the research.

The third trustworthiness strategy utilized in this research study was expert analysis. Dr. Alan L. Webb, an expert in qualitative research, reviewed the data and provided insight into data analysis. In addition, Dr. Webb posed questions to control for bias. Finally Dr. Webb examined and provided additional recommendations for thematic development of the findings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Positionality Statement

For many years, African-American males have been underrepresented at the post-secondary level of education. There are many reasons for this absence such as legal challenges, lack of financial aid, lack of adequate information regarding college admissions, and inadequate prior academic preparation at the secondary level (USDOE/Spellings Report, 2006). The existence of these challenges was the primary reason that motivated this researcher to explore this topic.

As an African-American male, a first generation college student, coming from a low income, single household while pursuing my bachelor's degree, some of these challenges experienced by African-American male students personally resonated with me. Upon completion of the data collection phase, a couple of questions surfaced in my mind regarding which students in this study closely resembled my experience. Would any information shared by any student have an impact on my research analysis? Within each research question and individual student story, there were some experiences which I had in common with the participants. However, there was one experience which I did not have in common with the individuals who participated in this study. During my secondary and undergraduate years of study, I did not participate in any pre-college program. Instead, I enlisted in the military (Army National Guard). Socialization into this organization provided me with all the mental, physical and financial tools I needed in order to complete my undergraduate degree.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs. This study utilized individual qualitative semi-structured interviews. This chapter discussed the selected research methodology and design, the selection process of participants, and the materials and instruments to be used in the study. Further data collection procedures, limitations, and ethical assurances were presented. The following chapter will present the findings of this study which resulted from the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter IV presents the key findings obtained from one-time individual semi-structured interviews with three students who have participated in a pre-college program prior to arriving at college and who are now participating in the SSS program at their respective college. Individual one-time semi-structured interviews were also conducted with three administrators. Weidman's Undergraduate Socialization model was used as the conceptual framework for the study and served as a starting point for data analysis. The three research questions which guided this study were:

1. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their choice of pursuing a post-secondary education?
2. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their first year college experience?
3. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their academic interactions on campus?

The results will be presented in three phases using Weidman's Undergraduate Socialization Framework. Each respective phase will highlight key themes drawn from the semi-structured interviews from three students and three administrators. Chapter III outlined the

overall research design and the methodology used in preparing this study, especially linking the participants and methodology to the research questions. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs prior to college enrollment and how they felt their participation prepared them for college enrollment. The results of this study provide useful information for parents, students, high school administrators, college and university administrators, and admissions officers in order to further expand higher education opportunities to this underrepresented group.

Key Elements of Conceptual Framework

As mentioned in previous chapters, the race for education for African-American males is marked by a series of challenges stemming from legal to financial. To serve as a background for analysis, the data were analyzed using a four-phased 400 meter relay race as a metaphor. The conceptual framework (Figure 1) Weidman's Undergraduate Socialization Framework represents four main points of (1) student background characteristics, (2) parental socialization, and (3) collegiate experiences of the framework used to guide this study (Weidman, 1984). Each of the three main points of this model were analyzed using the phase 1, 2, and 3 format (Figure 2).

In order to add some additional depth to this analysis, terms such as a running race, preparation, stadium entry, starting line, and finish line will be used to visually (Figure 3) depict the metaphor of a race/journey in which *all* college students must navigate in order to obtain a college degree. Figure 3 further illustrates each step overlapping the race/journey. The word *race*, in this analysis, is used as a metaphor referring to the actual journey itself or pursuit of a college education. *Preparation* represents the actions during the high school years in which all

aspiring college students must undertake to gain acceptance to college. *Stadium entry* refers to the specific stadium (college or university) where the actual race occurs. The *starting line* refers to specific point where the race begins, the first day of college. The final term *finish line*, refers to the goal/outcome of actually crossing the *finish line* (graduation) within six years. The key findings were told by each individual runner (student) sharing their own individual stories, within each phase, about regarding their journey.

Additional key findings were also told by each administrator upon arrival of these students at their particular stadium, especially how they provided additional assistance during Phase 3 - (collegiate experiences) and during Phase 4 - (non-college reference groups) in order to assist these students to reach their goal and meeting the intended outcome of crossing the finish line (graduation) within six years.

Site Overview

As mentioned in Chapter 3, (Table 1), these interviews were conducted at two separate site locations, Young and Fast Rising University.

Table 1: Site Analysis

Site Analysis

	Level/Control	Size and Setting	Enrollment Profile	Carnegie Basic Classification	Graduate Instructional Program Classification	Student Population
Young University	4YR/Public	Large: Primarily Non-Residential	Majority Undergraduate	Doctoral University/Very High Research Activity	Research Doctoral/STEM Dominant	20,902
Fast Rising University	4YR/Public	Large: Primarily Non-Residential	High Undergraduate	Doctoral University/Very High Research Activity	Research Doctoral w/Medical & Dental Programs	43,540

Data Analysis

The Weidman model of undergraduate socialization theory was constructed around three phases: student background characteristics, parental socialization, and collegiate experiences. This section of the document will describe the information which contributed to the personal, academic, and social development of each of the three student participants in this study.

Phase 1 - represents the first point of Weidman's model of undergraduate socialization, student background characteristics, which serves as a foundation for student success at the post-secondary educational level. During phase 1, the researcher found three students hereafter referred to as Kevin, Alexander and Don currently attending Young and Fast Rising Universities (Table 2). Each student arrived at their respective college with different background characteristics. Kevin, Alexander, and Don were asked 12 semi-structured questions (Appendix A) which gave them the opportunity to share their individual stories concerning how each of

them prepared for their upcoming educational race. Background characteristics of each student provided the researcher additional information used in this chapter and later in the discussion section in chapter five.

Table 2: Student/Administrator Breakdown by Site

Student/Administrator Breakdown by Site		
	Students Names/ Locations	Administrator Names/ Locations
Young University	Kevin & Alexander	Shelia
Fast Rising University	Don	Rebecca & Daniel

Kevin is a 21 year old fourth year student who is majoring in chemistry with a minor in forensic science. Kevin arrived at our interview calm and confident. Kevin attended a high school in a large metropolitan city in the Southeast portion of the United States. During his eleventh year of high school he participated in a College Preparatory and International Baccalaureate Program.

Alexander is a 21 year old third year student at Young University. Previously Alexander majored in biomedical science. However he changed his major to biology and subsequently to psychology with a minor in Spanish. Beginning in his ninth grade year, Alexander participated in Upward Bound. However, due to a “life crisis” Alexander had to discontinue his participation until his tenth grade year.

Don is a 19 nineteen year old first year student at Fast Rising University. Don has a double major in Psychology and Sociology. Don comes from a single family household and participated in Upward Bound as a high school student.

Phase 1 - Student Background Characteristics

The following background characteristics contributed to the undergraduate experience of the three students who participated in this study. For Kevin the following three background characteristics were formative in his undergraduate experience: (1) social awareness, (2) overcoming academic obstacles, and (3) academic preparation (3). For Alexander the following three background characteristics were formative in his undergraduate experience: (1) personal development, (2) financial resource awareness, and (3) summer bridge participation. For Don the following background characteristics were formative for his undergraduate experience: (1) staff interaction, (2) summer bridge program, and (3) social awareness.

Kevin

Kevin indicated that social awareness was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Kevin indicated that the college preparatory program in which he participated had no influence on his decision to attend college. However, this program gave him the opportunity to travel with other students to Washington D.C. and experience different methods of instruction versus a traditional teacher talk style of instruction.

Kevin indicated that overcoming academic obstacles was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males obstacles such as a lack of a variety of high school course offerings impedes their post-secondary educational pursuit. During our interview, Kevin explained “I was going through personal struggles in my transition and knew I needed to obtain additional support structures to help me with personal, financial, and academic issues such as tutoring.” Kevin stated that he didn’t feel that his high school adequately prepared him for college. He attributed this obstacle to a lack of resources

Kevin indicated that academic preparation was a characteristic that also contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males lack of academic preparation is one factor why African-American males are underrepresented at the post-secondary educational level. During our interview, Kevin stated “I participated in a pre-college prep program which was a part of my high school curriculum. This program consisted of eight classes requiring eight separate homework assignments and writing eight essays.” Kevin shared that the purpose of this delivery system was designed to resemble the rigor from a typical college schedule with a typical course load.

Alexander

Alexander indicated that personal development was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males, personal development opportunities such as intrapersonal communication skills are not readily available. For Alexander, participating in Upward Bound summer bridge program

provided him with an opportunity to become a small student group leader. Alexander stated “this experience established a solid foundation and allowed him to make a smooth transition to the SSS program at Young University. Alexander further stated that the personal development opportunities gained through Upward Bound led to good academic rapport inside and outside the classroom.

Alexander indicated that financial resource awareness was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. During our interview Alexander indicated “If I had not participated Upward Bound I would not have been as financially ready for college as I am now.” Students who participated in the summer bridge program through upward bound are provided with a stipend. For some African-American males part-time job opportunities are limited, but being paid to participate and learn while in the college process is a positive situation. Alexander further stated during our interview, “I treated Upward Bound as a job opportunity because I participated and they paid me. I did school work and they paid me. This was great!”

Alexander indicated that summer bridge participation was an additional characteristic that contributed to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Alexander’s participation in Upward Bound, and the summer bridge program had a positive impact on him. Alexander shared “My participation in Upward Bound’s summer bridge program allowed me to interact with college teachers, professors, and gave me the opportunity to take a college class, where I earned a grade of B, and I got a 3.0 in college... I’m like, wow this is great!”

Don

Don indicated that staff interaction was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Don, a very emotional individual, during our interview had to gather himself for a moment. Finally after regaining his composure, Don indicated “Upward Bound was *the* reason why I was able to get into college as one of the counselors became one of the assistant directors at the school where I was accepted, which is the reason I joined the SSS program at Fast Rising University.”

Don, like Alexander, indicated that summer bridge program participation was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Don went into additional detail stating “the summer program exposed me to a variety of different things, placed me in a diverse setting with both college and high school students from different backgrounds, and grade levels.

Don indicated that social awareness was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. During our interview, Don paused for a moment, sat forward in his seat and stated “participation in Upward Bound tested my social skills by enabling me to make friends and figure out what I was passionate about. Being surrounded by college students allowed me to get close to counselors to the point where I gained a mentor who became a life-long source of wisdom.

Phase 2 - Parental Socialization

Phase 2 - represents the second point of Weidman's model of undergraduate socialization. During this phase, Kevin, Alexander and Don had each arrived at the college. For many African-American male students, this experience marks the first time living away from home. Some students become homesick and tend to look towards their parents for guidance and support. As mentioned in previous chapters, the post educational level of their parents also plays a role for African-American males who are more likely to enroll in college immediately after high school if their parents possess a bachelor's or associate's degree (Talent Search Report, 2006).

The following parental socialization characteristics contributed to the undergraduate experience of the three students who participated in this study. For Kevin the following three parental socialization characteristics were formative in his undergraduate experience: (1) overcoming personal obstacles, (2) encouragement, and (3) mentoring. For Alexander the following three parental socialization characteristics were formative in his undergraduate experience: (1) mentoring, (2) encouragement, and (3) information awareness. For Don the following parental socialization characteristics were formative for his undergraduate experience: (1) encouragement, (2) information awareness, and (3) staff interaction.

Kevin

Kevin indicated that overcoming personal obstacles was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Everyone faces personal

challenges during their lifetime. The pursuit of any education is hard in itself, especially for African-American males pursuing a post-secondary education. Kevin had to overcome the fact that despite being a typical high school student maintaining an A/B average in high school, he earned a 2.50 after his first semester of college. During our interview, Keven stated “I pretty much was, like, stressed out and was going through a lot of personal things, and I kinda just heard great things about TRIO. I heard things like they were very supportive, very assisting, and could help me out, and just any type of aspect that I was struggling in. So I finally decided to apply.”

Kevin indicated that encouragement was a characteristic which contributed to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Encouragement is a mechanism that provides positive motivation. Parents typically provide encouragement to their children as motivation leading to a sense of achievement. For many African-American males, their parent’s educational levels often provide encouragement them to enroll in college, especially if their parents attended and graduated from college. During our interview, Kevin indicated both of his parents attended community college, but his mother obtained her associates degree. Kevin also stated that “I already knew I was going to apply for college because I was either going to apply for college or go to the military or I didn’t want to go to the military, so I went to college.”

Kevin indicated that mentoring was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Mentoring provides students opportunities one on one interaction with key people to provide insights on being successful. Many African-American male students look to their parents for advice and guidance to make decisions, especially pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities. Parents of many African-American males’ parents did not attend college often cannot provide proper advice and guidance about college.

During our interview, Kevin indicated that “the real talk conversations with my assigned SSS mentor allowed me to share my feelings without any pressure.” Kevin further added that “being a chemistry major, is not easy, so having someone to talk openly to really help.”

Alexander

Alexander indicated that mentoring was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For African-American males, mentoring is one reason why which African-American males are not pursuing post-secondary education. During our interview, Alexander described his mentoring experiences as he participated in Upward Bound. After he paused for about three seconds, and looked toward the sky, Alexander responded by saying “within Upward Bound, there are like really different-uh-really different students and different peers.” Alexander further added that “having so many different mentors and people that you can count on, and you can talk to in order to get counseling from, everything, it's just mind blowing, and that to me is what the black community needs, positive African American role models, males and females, well men and women, I like that better, I like that term better.” The mentoring Alexander received during his upward bound participation had a positive impact on him, and this experience transitioned with him to Young University.

Alexander indicated that encouragement was also a characteristic that contributed to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males, encouragement is a characteristic that motivates individuals to perform better. During our interview, Alexander shared with me that both of his parents attended community college, with his mother earning an associate’s degree in office management and his father an associate’s degree in fine arts.

Educational level of parents of African-American males influences their decisions to attend college, which drive many African-American male students to beat the educational odds.

Alexander indicated that information awareness was another characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males, an awareness of the overall college admission process provide underrepresented students with the tools they need to apply for college. During our interview, Alexander indicated that he had learned about the Upward Bound program from a counselor in that program. Later he was provided with an opportunity to be a part of an informational seminar, which peaked his interest to become involved at a deeper level of commitment. During this seminar Alexander realized that college was an option for someone like him.

Don

Don indicated that encouragement was a characteristic that contributed to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males, encouragement can be either positive or negative. During our interview, Don shared with me “neither of my parents attended college and my father did not graduate from high school.” Parental education levels are a positive indicator of whether African-American males choose to attend college. Many African-American males take pride in obtaining education levels higher than their parents. Once an African-American male obtains a college-degree they have the opportunity to elevate their socio-economic status as well as their parents’ socio-economic status.

Don indicated that information awareness was another characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American

males information awareness is critical. In our interview Don shared that with me that during his senior year he experienced difficulties in navigating the college process, so he ran to the Upward Bound program to seek help in figuring out what to do next because he was lost. As a result, the Upward Bound program provided him assistance in completing the college application process. In addition he was enabled to secure a scholarship and additional financial aid information.

Don indicated that staff interaction was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many students staff interaction provides additional communication opportunities to discuss academic goals and issues. For many African-American males, staff interaction can be challenging. After Don was not accepted into the college which he had always dreamed of attending he reflected upon his interaction with the staff during his summer bridge participation with Upward Bound. "I called my Upward Bound director to tell her about my current issue. She remembered me and she was able to communicate with those other directors at other schools to help me get into a college. She also helped me become involved in the SSS program at that college."

Phase 3 - Collegiate Experiences

Phase 3 - represents the third point of Weidman's model of undergraduate socialization which is the major portion of this model. During this portion of the model socialization actually begins as Kevin, Alexander, and Don are now at the starting line (first day of class) eagerly awaiting the start of their respective educational race. The difference in this phase as compared to the previous phase is that Kevin, Alexander, and Don must learn how to run their respective individual educational race, within their individual lane, and successfully handle each turn they

will soon encounter. With the assistance of faculty, administrators, support staff, campus organizations, and fellow students, everyone must collectively work with these students ensuring that they are provided with all the resources available so that they can cross the finish line and earn a college degree.

The following collegiate experiences characteristics contributed to the undergraduate experience of the three students who participated in this study. For Kevin the following three characteristics were formative in his undergraduate experience: (1) academic support, (2) SSS program awareness, and (3) SSS participation. For Alexander the following three characteristics were formative in his undergraduate experience: (1) cultural awareness, (2) academic support, and (3) leader development. For Don the following characteristics were formative for his undergraduate experience: (1) time management, (2) overcoming academic obstacles, and (3) overcoming personal obstacles.

Kevin

Kevin indicated that academic support was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Like many African-American males students, the transition from high school to college is not easy as this marks their first time being away from home. During our interview, Kevin described the importance of the academic support he received from Young University's SSS program. He stated, "the overall helpfulness that I heard they could provide as far as just if you needed help with just anything personal, needed help with anything financial wise, school wise, or just even emotional wise, they would be there to help out as much as they could." SSS programs provide a much needed support mechanism for students

like Kevin to succeed in college. Kevin is on track to graduate from Young University in spring 2020.

Kevin indicated that SSS program awareness was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American male students who attend college a lack of awareness of available campus resources still exist, despite their college acceptance. Kevin did not participate in a TRIO pre-college program. As a result his awareness of SSS was very limited. During our interview Kevin indicated that because he didn't participate in a TRIO pre-college program he was unaware of the SSS program and the services they provided. Kevin also stated that he learned about Young University's SSS program while attending another campus student organization orientation where SSS applications were being handed out.

Kevin indicated that SSS participation was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Many African-American males fail to pursue post-secondary education for a variety of reasons which include lack of access to resources. Kevin, as previously stated, did not participate in a TRIO pre-college program but learned about SSS once he arrived at Young University. Exposure to a variety of available SSS resources and services does not automatically equate to academic success. However, when exposure to SSS resources is combined with actual participation positive student advantages can be provided. During our interview Kevin shared the following, "my participation in the SSS program provided me with the resources that I had heard they could provide; such as personal assistance, financial assistance, school assistance, and emotional assistance. They would be there to help you as much as they could."

Alexander

Alexander indicated that cultural awareness was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American males, attending college marks the first time many have been away from home for an extended period of time. During our interview Alexander indicated that participating in Upward Bound was one opportunity for him to get away and learn about new cultures. He said, "I wanted to look at a variety of colleges because attending college was something I always wanted to do." Being exposed to different people and cultures provides African-American male students an opportunity to learn about other ethnic groups as well as obtain a deeper appreciation for life from a different perspective. For many African-American male students college also marks the first time when they are exposed to students who do not look like them.

Alexander indicated that academic support was an additional characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. For many African-American male students a lack of academic support at the secondary level often leaves students with fewer opportunities to attend college. During our interview Alexander stated "I attended a failing high school from ninth to eleventh grade and during my senior year I transferred." This transfer placed Alexander in a very positive environment where his new high school placed a heavy emphasis on college preparation. Alexander continued to participate in Upward Bound at his new high school. He also indicated that interacting with his new high school counselors prepared him more for college in one year than all the years at his previous high school.

Alexander indicated that leader development was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. As students attend college many

of them join student organizations where they are placed in leadership positions, some for the first time in their lives. Many African-American males may not have been afforded leadership opportunities prior to this point in their lives. For Alexander, who previously stated that he attended a failing high school for three years, the upward bound program provided him opportunities to lead. During our interview Alexander shared, “when I joined the SSS program at Young University, I served on the SSS program student-led advisory council that allowed students to have an active voice in the SSS program operations.” Alexander’s participation in this program allowed him to learn, grow, and expand his communication and leadership skills.

Don

Don indicated that time management was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. College attendance often marks the first time many African-American males leave home. As a result many African-American male students must learn how to manage their time. During our interview Don discussed his Upward Bound summer bridge experience. According to Don, “this summer experience marked the first time I had been away from home which created unknown expectations, exposed me to the rigors of a college structure, while providing both freedom and independency in managing school work, time, and social life. In the process I was able to increase my communication skills which enabled me to grow as a person in a more timely fashion than I would have been able to accomplish on my own.” Time management is a critical component for college success, and Don utilized time management skills learned in his previous Upward Bound experiences to effectively navigate his educational race.

Don indicated that overcoming academic obstacles was a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Many underrepresented African-American male students face significant academic obstacles at the secondary level, such as a lack of a curriculum which challenges students for success at the post-secondary level. During our interview, Don shared a particular situation where he had to overcome an academic obstacle.

“During the summer after graduating from high school I was placed in a difficult situation where I was originally planning on attending my first college choice, a specific flagship school. I intended to apply only to this institution. I was not accepted to this university because my ACT score fell below the average scores for acceptance to this school. I obtained assistance through the Upward Bound program in order to prepare and re-take my ACT exam. Even though I did not get accepted to my first choice participation in Upward Bound prepared me to deal with disappointments in life and move forward and get accepted by another college.”

Don indicated that overcoming personal obstacles was also a characteristic that contributed considerably to his experience as an undergraduate in college. Many African-American male students face tremendous obstacles and setbacks as they pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. During our interview Don shared one particular moment where he thought going to college was no longer a possibility. After learning he was not accepted to his first college choice Don applied to two other colleges and he was not accepted to either one. According to Don, “reality set in, forcing me to face the fact that I might not attend college as it was late in the college acceptance period.” With visions of still attending college, after his initial setback Don stated “I remembered a conversation I had with my Upward Bound director and she told me not to give up, so I continued to submit college application documents to other schools.”

Eventually Don was accepted into a college and he currently serves as a student mentor for first year students as Fast Rising University.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to present the results obtained from six semi-structured interviews with three students who have participated in a pre-college program prior to arriving at college and now participating in the SSS program at their respective college and with three administrators. The results of these findings were analyzed within three main points of Weidman's Undergraduate Socialization Model and presented in five sections (1) Methodology Summary (2) Key Elements of Conceptual Framework (3) Site Overview (4) Data analysis and (5) Chapter Summary. The final chapter will focus on the three research questions that guided this study, provide a discussion of the results, state the conclusions, and provide recommendations for future research, policy makers, practitioners, and students.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of African-American men who participated in pre-college preparatory programs. The focus was on African-American men who have completed their first year of college. Chapter One introduced the background of the study, the research questions that guided this study, and the overall significance of the study. Chapter Two provided a literature review of the relevant information available regarding this topic. Chapter Three provided the methodology for this particular study which included the chosen population, sample size, procedures used in order to collect, interpret, and analyze the collected data. Chapter four described the findings based upon the collected data, and the final chapter will discuss the findings, draw conclusions, and make recommendations. This chapter is organized into three sections, including 1) discussion 2) conclusions and 3) recommendations.

Discussion

In order to summarize the results of this study, three research questions introduced in Chapter 1 were used to guide this study regarding how pre-college program participation affected African-American men who have completed their freshmen year of college. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework is the critical part for any research study as it

provides the researcher with a visual road map in order to navigate, connect relationships, and provide direction for the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The conceptual framework, combined with the research questions, allowed the researcher to answer the research questions by identifying common themes based on the data collected during six semi-structured interviews conducted with three students and three administrators. These themes where then categorized and reported under each respective research question. (Figure 3)

Table 3: Research Questions w/Themes



During the data analysis on pre-college preparation, three themes emerged within each of the three research questions. The three research questions used in this study were designed to obtain additional information regarding the perception of pre-college programs and their positive influences on African-American males.

RQ1. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their choice of pursuing a post-secondary education?

During the data analysis on the initial research question three themes came to the fore. Those themes concerned information, 2) awareness, and 3) encouragement.

Information

Information was the first theme identified during data analysis regarding the manner in which pre-college program participation influenced African-American men and their choices in pursuing a post-secondary education. For Kevin, who did not participate in a TRIO pre-college program, but he participated in a Pre-college prep program which was a part of his high school curriculum. The rigors of this program enhanced his expectations for college, which consisted of eight total classes requiring eight separate homework assignments and the composition of eight essays. Finally, all of the students interviewed indicated that their high school curriculum did not fully prepare them for college. The Educational Talent Search (ETS) program which lacks vast amounts of research as compared to Upward Bound. ETS programs have also expanded college access by providing students with ACT/SAT preparation, financial aid information for grants, loans, scholarships, and related information in order to navigate the college application process (ETS Fact Sheet, 2016).

Awareness

The second theme identified during data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American men and their choices in pursuing a post-secondary education was awareness. All of the participants interviewed indicated their reasons for participating in pre-college programs was because the pre-college programs provided awareness of available resources (financial aid, scholarship, and the application process), led to their decision to attend college. One particular pre-college program which exerted a positive influence on these African-American male students was Upward Bound, which offers academic instruction in mathematics, and laboratory sciences. Upward Bound also offers tutoring and counseling services, and work-study programs to improve the financial and economic awareness for students. Upward Bound was the pre-college program that most of the participants interviewed in this study participated in. Data analysis pointed to one interesting aspect of Upward Bound, which was their summer bridge program. The summer bridge program is one of the reasons why Upward Bound is the largest and most well-known TRIO program as mentioned in Chapter One. Upward Bound has vast amounts of research, longitudinal studies and collected data and focuses on specific programs of study, such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The summer bridge program takes place during the summer months and is conducted on an actual college campus across the United States. Upward Bound students typically spend four to six weeks on a college campus, where they stay in dormitories, eat at the campus dining facility, and attend classes. For many of these students, especially African-American males, participating in the summer bridge program marks the first time being away from home. During the summer bridge programs students are exposed to life on a college

campus, introduced to the rigors of college coursework, develop time management skills, and increase social interaction. Don, who was previously unaware of pre-college programs, learned about Upward Bound through a friend who attended a TRIO function. Don went into additional detail stating that “the summer program exposed me to a variety of different things, placed me in a diverse setting with both college and high school students from different backgrounds, grade levels and coaches. This summer experience marked the first time I had been away from home which created unknown expectations, exposed me to the rigors of a college structure, while providing both freedom and independence in managing school work, time management, social life, and increased communication skills, enabling me to grow as a person faster than I would have on my own.” “Upward Bound prepared me for my college enrollment by helping me get in college.”

Encouragement

The third theme identified during data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerts upon African-American men and their choices in pursuing a post-secondary education was encouragement. All students interviewed in this study were classified as first-generation college students. Data analysis for this study showed that TRIO programs like Upward Bound provided students such as Alexander a much needed lift, especially when it appeared that college attendance was in question. Alexander began participating in Upward Bound during his freshman year while attending a failing high school for his first three years of high school. During the summer of his junior year Alexander participated in the Upward Bound summer bridge program and was allowed to go on multiple college visits. While on one of these

college visits Alexander met and spoke with a SSS director at a very large university about his college dreams and his current high school. This SSS director took the initiative to listen to his story, and this visit Alexander realized that “*college was an option for someone like me*, and these college visits *brightened my day and caused me to desire to go to college even more.*” Alexander ultimately transferred high schools for his senior year. At Alexander’s new high school, his counselors often talked about college, again making him feel that college attendance was obtainable, and he credited his participation in Upward Bound summer bridge program for encouraging him to continue his dreams.

For many first generation students parental involvement during a student’s secondary years plays a significant role for African-American males, especially if their parents attended college themselves and these students are more likely to enroll in college immediately after high school especially if their parents possess a bachelor’s or an associate’s degree. Data during these interviews indicated that both Kevin’s and Alexander’s parents attended college and earned associate degrees. Data during these interviews also indicated that neither of Don’s parents attended college, and only one of his parent’s completed high school. However, despite Don’s parents’ educational background, both of his parents encouraged and supported his college aspirations and his involvement in Upward Bound. In fact, Don’s mother shared with him about one of his cousins who was involved in Upward Bound in high school and the positive impact it had on him; ultimately leading to college enrollment. According to Don, “this sparked my interest even more.”

RQ2. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their first year college experience?

Data analysis uncovered three themes with respect to the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American males with respect to their first year college experience. Those themes were 1) increased interaction with staff, 2) mentoring opportunities and 3) academic support.

Increased Interaction With Staff

The first theme identified during data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted on African-American men and their first year college experience was increased staff interaction. During the data analysis, all of the students interviewed indicated that because of their participation in pre-college programs prior to attending college, they continued their participation in Student Support Services (SSS) once they arrived at college. Even though each SSS program varies in size and resources, each program offers core services such as academic tutoring, guidance in selecting postsecondary academic courses, information related to public and private scholarships and financial aid programs, assistance with completing financial aid applications, financial and economic literacy counseling, assistance with student application to graduate and professional programs and assistance with student application to and from four year programs.

Navigating college is tough for any student, but extremely tough for African-American males, who are already underrepresented in the first place. Data analysis in this study identified increased interaction with staff as a key to success. Increased staff interaction is accomplished

through student engagement. Kevin and Alexander both shared that their initial SSS orientation at Young University provided them with expectations for college success. Young University accomplishes this through an initial orientation program called Real Talk, which is mandatory for all first year students, regardless of whether they are a transfer, older non-traditional or a traditional 18 year old student. Real talk firmly established program expectations from day one, demonstrated their dedication to student success, and addressed three main points, mentoring, academic support and mandatory tutoring. During this initial orientation, each first year student is paired with a mentor for the first 8 weeks once they arrive on campus.

Mentoring Opportunities

The second theme identified during data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American men and their first year college experience was mentoring opportunities. The Real Talk program at Young University maintains high levels of contact with their students. One way in which this is accomplished is through mentoring. As stated earlier, Young University placed emphasis on mentoring as each first year student is assigned a mentor for their first eight weeks with each student meeting with their assigned mentor a minimum of three times a week. For many African-American males, a lack of a mentor is a primary reason why few in this group decide to enroll in college. During our interview Alexander recalled his first year experiences. He paused for about three seconds, looked toward the sky, and then responded “having so many different mentors and people that you can count on, and you can talk to in order to get counseling from, everything, it's just mind

blowing, and that to me is what the black community needs, positive African American role models, males and females, well men and women. I like that better, I like that term better.”

Academic Support

The third theme identified during data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American men and their first year college experience was academic support. During the data analysis, all of the students interviewed indicated that because of their participation in pre-college programs prior to attending college, they continued their participation in Student Support Services (SSS) once they arrived at college. Data analysis also indicated that each SSS programs varies in size and resources, but each program offers core services such as academic tutoring, guidance in selecting postsecondary academic courses, information related to public and private scholarship and financial aid programs, assistance with completing financial aid applications, financial and economic literacy counseling, assistance with student application to graduate and professional programs and assistance with student application to and from four year programs. Data analysis further indicated that building student relationships play an important role in student success. At Young University, a student led advisory council was established to give students the opportunity to have both a voice and a buy in to the operations of the program. This allowed students to expand on their academic preparation, organizational leadership, and communication skills, increasing the student’s overall involvement in the SSS program.

RQ3. How do African-American men perceive the influence of pre-college program participation with respect to their academic interactions on campus?

Three themes emerged from the data which addressed the third research question. Those themes were 1) overcoming personal obstacles, 2) overcoming academic obstacles and 3) overcoming financial obstacles.

Overcoming Personal Obstacles

The first theme identified during the data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American men and their academic interactions on campus was overcoming personal obstacles. As each student began their college race doubts begin to enter into their mind while running this race leading to such questions as “Do I even belong in this race, can I perform at this level, and can I complete this race and cross the finish line?” Data analysis uncovered a significant personal obstacle. During our interview, Don shared a story about a personal obstacle which he related to the SSS he met while participating in the Upward Bound Summer Bridge program at Fast Rising University. The summer after his high school graduation he stated, “I was placed in a difficult situation where I was originally planning on attending my first choice, a specific flagship school and I was planning not to submit any admission documents to any other schools. Upon learning that I was not accepted to my first choice I was at a standstill, looking kind of lost and not knowing what was my next move”. Then Don was forced all of a sudden to face reality as it was now late in the college acceptance period. With the vision of attending college still in his plans Don indicated “I

had to start sending my documents to other schools so I ran to the Upward Bound program to seek assistance about getting in college, securing scholarship and financial aid information and to find someone to help me figure out what to do because I was lost". Don was accepted a Fast Rising University and he emphatically states "Upward Bound participation was the reason why I was able to get into Fast Rising University." One of the Upward Bound Summer Bridge program counselors had recently become one of the assistant directors at Fast Rising University. This was the reason Don joined their SSS program and found the means to overcome his doubts about his ability to succeed in higher education.

Overcoming Academic Obstacles

The second theme identified during the data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American men and their academic interactions on campus was overcoming academic obstacles. Data from the study indicated that academic support at Fast Rising University is provided through continuous individual student assessments, academic performance reviews, and staff recommendations such as participation in academic tutoring to ensure SSS students are maintaining good academic standing. During our interview, Don indicated that after his first semester at Fast Rising University, his overall GPA was a 2.1. Since Don had a double major in Psychology and Sociology the SSS staff recommended that Don obtain free tutoring, especially if he wanted to graduate and attend graduate school. The officials at SSS told him that if he wanted to achieve this objective he would need to get his grades up. During his second semester, Don earned a 3.0 GPA.

Overcoming Financial Obstacles

The third theme identified during the data analysis regarding the influence which pre-college program participation exerted upon African-American men and their academic interactions on campus was overcoming financial obstacles. Data analysis indicated that SSS students are students from lower economic households and these students are Pell Grant eligible students. SSS programs at Fast Rising University and Young University place emphasis on financial literacy, as more students from lower income households are taking out additional students loans as their primary source of funding in order to pay for college. Data analysis also indicated at both Fast Rising and Young University had mandatory financial literacy programs which were conducted during their initial orientation with their first year students in order to prevent financial obstacles from disturbing the undergraduate student, the graduate student, and their families.

Administrator Reflections

Three administrators from the SSS programs at Young and Fast Rising universities were interviewed for this study. Their names were Rebecca, Shelia, and Daniel. Each participant had at least 15 years working experience in the SSS program at their respective institutions. Rebecca has 29 years of total experience, with twenty-five years of experience as director of SSS at Fast Rising University. Shelia has served as directors of SSS at Young University for ten years. Rebecca, Shelia and Daniel each indicated that student graduation rates at their universities further supports the data collected from Kevin and Alexander as their current academic progress

indicates that they are approaching their respective finish lines. SSS programs at both Young and Fast Rising University are exceeding the normal university average. Young University indicated based on their 2018 annual progress report that their SSS graduation rates were 71%, which exceeded their overall actual university graduation rate of 58.2%. Students in SSS programs at Young University have a persistence rate of 98%, which means students persist from year to year (fall to fall) and they matriculate, (move from their freshmen to sophomore year), and their students good standing rate is 96%, which means that their students are maintaining a GPA of 2.0 or higher. Young and Fast Rising University's SSS programs support 220 students as required by Federal Law within their approved grant, but Young University operates both a traditional and a STEM-SSS approved grant, which serves 320 students.

The data collected from these three administrators fell along two separate lines. The first line concerned the strengths of their institution's SSS program and the second line concerned the weaknesses of their institution's SSS program. The participants registered the following five strengths of their respective programs: (1) campus familiarization (2) knowledge of resources available at the SSS (3) familiarity of the SSS staff, (4) providing students initial expectations of how to be successful (5) awareness of transitioning from one TRIO program to another.

Strengths of the SSS Programs

Campus familiarization

The data in this study indicated that the SSS staff familiarizes their respective SSS programs to their students as a part of their involvement during the on- campus summer bridge program. The data also indicated that SSS administrators maintain communication with the university faculty and other support staff, providing updates on any potential student issues on a case by case basis.

Knowledge of resources

The data in this study indicated that the SSS staff provides knowledge of resources available during the on campus summer bridge program and during the initial orientation sessions at the beginning of each semester for new first year and transfer students. However, once the students begin the school year, depending upon the situations, the SSS staff provides updates based upon the situation, such as tutoring recommendations after mid-term grades.

Familiarity with SSS staff

The data in this study indicated that the SSS staff familiarity is made by direct engagement with students during the on- campus summer bridge program, during the initial orientation sessions at the beginning of each semester for new first year and transfer students,

and as a part of the weekly mentoring sessions during the first eight weeks upon arrival on campus.

Provided students with initial expectations for success

The data in this study indicated that SSS staff provides students initial expectations of how to be successful during their initial orientation sessions at the beginning of each semester for new first year and transfer students, and again as a part of the weekly mentoring sessions during the first eight weeks upon arrival on campus. The data also indicated that throughout the school year, students are reminded of the program expectations on a case by case basis, especially if they are not meeting the SSS program or the university minimum academic requirements.

Provided awareness of necessity for smooth transition among Trio programs

The data in this study indicated that the SSS staff provides awareness of transitioning from one TRIO program to another while students are involved in the on-campus summer bridge programs, and maintaining communications with other SSS programs and TRIO program administrators at federal, regional and local TRIO training sessions

Weakness of the SSS Programs

The participants registered one glaring weakness in their programs. Each participant mentioned that getting students involved and keeping them engaged in the SSS program was a

constant battle. SSS staff members are constantly attempting to be inventive and creative in finding ways to maintain student participation, especially for students who are enrolled in difficult majors such as nursing .Administrators at Young University identified on campus recruitment as a weakness, despite having a high overall student population, on-campus recruitment at times has proven difficult as each year universities must maintain a SSS program consisting of 200 students on one grant. Each of the administrative participants lamented the reality that many students seem to “fall through the cracks.” Each participant articulated what they called the “ten day rule.” Shelia explained it in the following manner. “Normally students arrive on campus. There are many events and activities which are competing for their attention. I have discovered that if students who were involved in the summer bridge program have not become engaged in the SSS program they are usually lost for the rest of their time at the university.” It appears that students get entrapped by many of the entertainment aspects of college life and lose sight of the reason why they are in college. As a result many of them fall through the cracks and are never heard from because they usually fail their first semester and leave the campus.

Conclusions

Two findings from the study were additional to the previous literature. These two findings were considered to be original contributions to the field of study. In order to highlight these two findings they were designated to the conclusions section of the final chapter. This section will take into consideration the following conclusions, which arose from this study. First, there is discontinuity between the statistical reality that African-American male

participation has steadily decreased over the past twenty-five years and the positive experiences of the three students/participants in this study, 2) SSS On campus recruitment is a major weakness of SSS programs.

Discontinuity

The results of this study perceived that pre-college programs were beneficial to the underrepresented students who participated in this study. Since the inception of TRIO programs in 1964, many underrepresented and first generation students have utilized the services that each program (Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and Student Support Services) offers in order to prepare underrepresented students to pursue post-secondary education.

Pre-college program offerings have opened the college gates providing increased opportunities for African-American males to pursue a post-secondary education. However, African-American male's college enrollments numbers are still disproportionately low when compared with other student groups, and two-thirds of African-American men who start college are not completing their studies within six years. As this trend continues, many policy makers, college administrators, teachers, and parents will continue to generate unanswered questions regarding why African-American males continue to be underrepresented on college campuses. Despite the positive effects of pre-college programs encouraging disadvantaged students to not only complete their high school education, but also to continue their education at the postsecondary level, the results of this study indicate that there is still work left to do.

Pre-college programs have positively affected many underrepresented students over the past fifty-five years by consistently providing assistance and support to first generation,

disadvantaged, and students from lower socio-economic status to gain entry into college. If pre-college programs have exerted a positive influence on disadvantaged students, as indicated in this study, then why are college enrollment numbers still disproportionately low for African American males when compared with other student groups? This study has led the researcher to raise three additional questions which could seek to explain this finding. 1) Could the three students who participated in this study be outliers and not truly representative of the population? (2) Are the respective pre-college programs themselves not as great as the results of this study indicate? 3). Do the problems regarding low African-American male college enrollment lie at the secondary educational level.

On-Campus Recruitment/Awareness

This study uncovered a weakness in SSS program which had not been mentioned in previous research; namely that making students aware of SSS's existence was a serious problem. Despite the high overall student population, colleges are still experiencing difficulties with on-campus recruitment. Since the problem presented in this study was to understand why African-American males college enrollment numbers are disproportionately low compared to other student groups further illustrates why some SSS programs are having difficulties in maintaining the minimum number of students as stated in their five year grants. There could be a variety of reasons why some SSS programs are having difficulties in on-campus recruitment. 1.) Institutional types such as the ones identified in this study may not have a large number of African-American males enrolled on campus, 2). The mandatory participation requirement(s)

placed on students that participate in SSS programs, 3). The overall campus life itself, as some college and university's social atmosphere presents distractions for African-American males.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings of this study the researcher offers three recommendations. The first recommendation is intended for researchers. The second recommendation is intended for practitioners. The third recommendation is intended for African-American male high school and college students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on this subject should be conducted at the secondary level targeting the same group to see if there are any similarities that may exist with this study. Future studies should also be conducted focusing specifically on the Student Support Services Programs themselves to determine the program's overall effectiveness. These future studies should utilize qualitative research methodologies through the use of single individual semi-structured interviews using the third point, collegiate experiences, of Weidman's Undergraduate Socialization Model. The institutional types targeted for future studies should target small to mid-sized public four year institutions and, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as these institutional types are where the majority of African-American males are enrolling.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Data analysis for this study identified a key component which exerted a positive influence upon Kevin, Alexander and Don. This component was a smooth transition between summer pre-college programs to their campus SSS programs. In order for SSS programs to increase their on-campus recruitments, institutions may want to consider four recommended actions, 1) designate a dedicated SSS staff member to engage and maintain communications with the summer bridge program participants. This engagement could have positive effects on student decisions to attend this particular college. 2). Ensure that a SSS program representative is included in the university summer orientation programs for incoming first year students and transfer students as most campuses typically hold these sessions during the summer prior to the fall semester, 3). Work with the admissions recruiters to identify potential students early in the admission process and obtain listing of newly admitted students that met the SSS program participant criteria, 4) engage identified students within a ten day timeframe once they arrive on campus. This early engagement will ensure that these students have a support mechanism in place. For many of these students this marks their first time away from home which is a crucial time in their lives and also a time when they are emotionally, psychologically and socially vulnerable. In addition this is a time when they are required to make important decisions concerning their futures.

Recommendations for Students

Data analysis for this study identified a transition between summer pre-college programs and campus SSS programs. In order for African-American males to increase their overall college enrollment numbers, each student may want to consider three recommended actions, 1) for those who participate in Summer Bridge programs, maintain periodic contact with SSS program administrators. 2) For those who did not participate in pre-college programs, especially TRIO programs, initiate and make contact with SSS administrators for all schools to which they apply. 3). Visit SSS program offices when making college visits and maintain communications with the SSS program administrators. 4) Contact the SSS program within a ten day timeframe upon arrival on campus. This early engagement will provide a support mechanism and a smooth transition from home to college.

Conclusion

This research study set three goals. The first goal was to fulfill the purpose statement. The second goal was to answer the research questions. The third goal was to make an original contribution to the study of higher education administration.

The purpose of this research was to better understand the experiences of African American males who participated in pre-college programs. The study discovered that pre-college programs were advantageous for those African American males who participated in them. The study also discovered that participation in pre-college programs effectively prepared African American males for engaging in the college experience.

The research questions inquired concerning the perception of participation in pre-college programs exerted upon African American males with respect to pursuing a post-secondary education, with respect to first year college experience, and with respect to academic interactions on campus. The findings of the study demonstrated the perceptions that pre-college programs positively influenced African American males to make a decision to pursue a post-secondary education. Specifically the findings of the study discovered that pre-college programs provided African American males with information concerning the process of attending college, awareness concerning the phenomena to be encountered in the process of attending college, and the encouragement to believe that attaining a college degree was within their capability. The findings of the study further perceived that pre-college programs positively influenced African American males with respect to their first year college experience. Specifically the findings of the study perceived that pre-college programs enhanced the first year experience of African American males by providing them with means for increased interaction with faculty and staff, mentoring opportunities, and academic support systems. Finally, the finding of the study demonstrated that pre-college programs positively influenced African American males with respect to their academic interaction. Specifically the finding of the study discovered that pre-college programs provided African American males with strategies to overcome personal obstacles, financial obstacles, and academic obstacles.

This study registered two modest findings which are original contributions to the field of Higher Education Administration. The first discovery was that a smooth and consistent transition from high school to summer bridge programs to student support services was the key ingredient to academic success for African American males at the college level. A second original contribution was that Student Support Services have difficult in securing African American

males and retaining their participation. The solutions to two problems may rest in what this research has coined as the “ten day rule.” Successful African American male students proactively move quickly into involvement in the Student Support Services within ten days of their arrival on campus. Those who do not become involved within that ten day period have a higher degree of not persisting. If African American male students are made aware of this ten day rule and abide by it the statistical reality that African American males steady decrease in enrollment and persistence in higher education could possibly be halted and then reversed.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol (Students)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

TRIO Programs and the experiences of African-American male students

SECTION I.

INSTRUCTIONS

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Kendrick D. Traylor. Thank you for coming. In this interview I will ask you about your experiences in your participation in a TRIO pre-college program. The purpose is to understand how African-American male college students feel about their participation in pre-college programs shaped their decision to pursue a post-secondary education and what benefits you gained. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

TAPE RECORDER INSTRUCTIONS

If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all students' comments without any reference to individuals.

CONSENT FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this Informed Consent Form (read and sign this consent form). (Hand each Interviewee the consent form.) (After Interviewee returns preamble/consent form, turn tape recorder on.)

For Student Interviews

Interview Opening

(Ice Breaker) Tell me a little about yourself?

Q1. What is your current year in college?

Q2. Which Pre-college program were you involved in? (Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search)

Q3. What were your reasons for participating in a pre-college program?

Q4. What was your primary reason for choosing this particular pre-college program?

Q5. How did you find out about Pre-college Programs?

Q6. Explain what aspects of the pre-college program that you participated in were the most helpful?

Q7. How well do you think your high school prepared you for college?

Q8. Explain how the pre-college program you participated in prepared you for college enrollment?

Q9. What role did the pre-college program in which you participated influence your decision to apply to college?

Q10. Please describe your personal experiences in participating in a pre-college program?

Q11. What is your major?

Q12. What high school did you attend? Where is it located?

Q13. What year or grade were you in when you began participating in Pre-college programs?

Q14. Did your parents attend college? If so, did earn a college degree?

SECTION II.

DEBRIEFING

(READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ALOUD TO EACH INTERVIEWEE.)

Thank you very much for coming this morning (afternoon). Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.

The purpose of this interview is to better understand how African-American male college students feel about their participation in pre-college programs shaped their decision to pursue a post-secondary education and what benefits you gained. We are interested in your opinions and your reactions. In no way is this interview designed to individually evaluate a person's abilities. The task is not diagnostic, nor can it provide a measure of the "quality" of your performance. Your only requirement was to do the best job that you could.

The results of this research will provide useful information to better understand the success of pre-college programs and how these programs benefit African-American men prior to enrollment and once they arrive at college. The study will provide useful information for parents, students, high school administrators, colleges and universities administrator and admissions officers that will help in structuring educational programs to be most effective and ideal in helping student's complete college.

Your information will be kept anonymous during all phases of this study including any experimental writings, published or not. Names will be known only to the PI and other listed personnel. The names will not be used as identifiers in the research to ensure confidentiality of the participants and the institution. No information will be released that identifies students by name. Information from the interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Electronic data will be maintained on a password-protected computer. The audiotapes of the interview will be destroyed when the study is completed.

Procedures for maintaining confidentiality are as follows: (1) individual participants' results will be pooled with group results; and (2) participants should not place any identifying information on data collection instruments. (Such identifiers include name, social security number, student identification number, specific birth data, telephone number, address, etc.)

DQ1. Is there any other information regarding your experience that you think would be useful for me to know?

No

Yes

DQ1a. (IF NOT ALREADY ANSWERED) Please share that information with me.

Again, thank you for participating. (TURN TAPE-RECORDER OFF.)

APPENDIX B- Interview Protocol (Administrators)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

TRIO Programs and the experiences of African-American male students

SECTION I.

INSTRUCTIONS

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Kendrick D. Traylor. Thank you for coming. In this interview I will ask you about your experiences in your participation in a TRIO pre-college program. The purpose is to understand how African-American male college students feel about their participation in pre-college programs shaped their decision to pursue a post-secondary education and what benefits you gained. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

TAPE RECORDER INSTRUCTIONS

If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all students' comments without any reference to individuals.

CONSENT FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this Informed Consent Form (read and sign this consent form). (Hand each Interviewee the consent form.) (After Interviewee returns preamble/consent form, turn tape recorder on.)

For Administrator Interviews

Interview Opening

(Ice Breaker) Tell me a little about yourself?

Q1. How long have you been working with TRIO Programs?

Q2. Describe the Office of Student Support Services expectations for students that participate in TRIO programs?

Q3. How many students does your office serve?

Q4. Based on the number of students you serve, which TRIO pre-college program your students indicated that they participated in prior to arriving on campus?

Q5. How many Staff Members does your Staff currently have?

Q6. What do you believe are the major strengths and weaknesses of each of the Pre-college programs you have worked with?

Q7. How does the University of Alabama's Student Support Services (TRIO programs) resources compare with other institutions? Please explain your answer relative to staff size, budget, facilities, graduate assistants, and information processing resources.

Q8. How does the University of Alabama Student Support Services assess overall effectiveness of their program?

Q9. What do you believe are the major assets of your Student Support Services Program?

Q10. What do you believe are the major weaknesses of your Student Support Services Program?

Q11. Based on your program, how would you measure the effectiveness of your program on overall graduation rates?

Q12. What are the Top 3 majors of students in your SSS Program?

SECTION II.

DEBRIEFING

(READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ALOUD TO EACH INTERVIEWEE.)

Thank you very much for coming this morning (afternoon). Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.

The purpose of this interview is to better understand how African-American male college students feel about their participation in pre-college programs shaped their decision to pursue a post-secondary education and what benefits you gained. We are interested in your opinions and your reactions. In no way is this interview designed to individually evaluate a person's abilities. The task is not diagnostic, nor can it provide a measure of the "quality" of your performance. Your only requirement was to do the best job that you could.

The results of this research will provide useful information to better understand the success of pre-college programs and how these programs benefit African-American men prior to enrollment and once they arrive at college. The study will provide useful information for parents, students, high school administrators, colleges and universities administrator and admissions officers that will help in structuring educational programs to be most effective and ideal in helping student's complete college.

Your information will be kept anonymous during all phases of this study including any experimental writings, published or not. Names will be known only to the PI and other listed personnel. The names will not be used as identifiers in the research to ensure confidentiality of the participants and the institution. No information will be released that identifies students by name. Information from the interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Electronic data will be maintained on a password-protected computer. The audiotapes of the interview will be destroyed when the study is completed.

Procedures for maintaining confidentiality are as follows: (1) individual participants' results will be pooled with group results; and (2) participants should not place any identifying information on data collection instruments. (Such identifiers include name, social security number, student identification number, specific birth data, telephone number, address, etc.)

DQ1. Is there any other information regarding your experience that you think would be useful for me to know?

No

Yes

DQ1a. (IF NOT ALREADY ANSWERED) Please share that information with me.
Again, thank you for participating. (TURN TAPE-RECORDER OFF.)

APPENDIX C- Approved IRB



April 11, 2019

Kendrick D. Traylor
Department of ELPTS
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 870302

Re: IRB # EX-18-CM-049-R1 "TRIO Programs and the Experiences of African American Male Students"

Dear Mr. Traylor:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application. Your renewal application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46.101(b)(1) as outlined below:

(I) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

The approval for your application will lapse on April 10, 2020. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the annual report to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed stamped consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Title of Research: TRIO programs and the experiences of African-American male students

Investigator(s): Kendrick Traylor, Karri Holley

IRB Approval #: EX-18-CM-049-R1

You are being asked to be in a research study.

The name of this study is "TRIO programs and the experiences of African-American male students."

This study is being conducted by Kendrick Traylor, a doctoral student at The University of Alabama. His faculty supervisor is Dr. Karri Holley, an associate professor in UA College of Education.

What is the purpose of this study—what is it trying to learn?

The purpose of this study is to understand how African-American male college students feel about how their participation in pre-college programs shaped their decisions to pursue a post-secondary education and what benefits they gained from their participation.

Why is this study important—what good will the results do?

This study will allow us to better understand the success of pre-college programs and how these programs benefit African-American men prior to enrollment and once they arrive at college. The study will provide useful information for parents, students, high school administrators, colleges and universities administrator and admissions officers.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to be in this study because you were identified as a student participant in a TRIO program or because you work as a university staff member in a TRIO program.

How many other people will be in this study?

It is expected that 20 people (10 students and 10 staff/administrators) will be asked to participate in this study.

Page 1 of 3

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 4/1/19
EXPIRATION DATE: 4/10/20

What will I be asked to do in this study?

Students and staff/administrators will be asked to participate in a one-time individual semi-structured interview.

How much time will I spend being in this study?

It is expected that participants will spend no more than 1 hour in the interview.

Will being in this study cost us anything?

This study will not cost anything other than the time required to complete the interview.

What are the benefits of being in this study?

There are no direct benefits to be gained by participants in this study. Results from the study will be used to understand the impact of the program and potential changes to be made to the university student experience.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There are minimal risks involved in this study. Participant identity will remain confidential, and individuals may decide to discontinue participation at any time. If students decide to discontinue participation, there is no impact on their involvement in the program.

How will my privacy be protected?

You do not have to answer any questions or give us any information that you do not want to.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Names will be known only to the PI and other listed personnel. The names will not be used as identifiers in the research to ensure confidentiality of the participants and the institution. No information will be released that identifies students by name. Information from the interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Electronic data will be maintained on a password-protected computer. The audiotape^w of the interview will be destroyed when the study is completed.

Do I have to be in this study?

No. You can refuse to be in the study. You can also start the study and decide to stop at any time. Individuals may decide to discontinue participation at any time.

If I don't want to be in the study, are there other choices?

If you do not want to be in this study, the other choice is to refuse.

What if new information is learned during the study that might affect my well-being or decision to continue in the study?

You can tell us at any time whether you want to continue in the study or not.

What if we have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints?

Page 2 of 3

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB 4449
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 4-10-20
EXPIRATION DATE: 4-10-20

If you have questions about the study now, please ask them. If you have questions or concerns later, you can reach the study's principal investigator Kendrick Traylor at 205-259-9511 (kdtaylor@crimson.ua.edu) or the faculty advisor Dr. Karri Holley at 205-345-7825 (kaholley@ua.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at 205-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066.

You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/>. You may e-mail the Research Compliance Office at rscmpliance@research.ua.edu.

After you participate, you are encouraged to complete the survey for research participants that is online at the outreach website or you may ask the investigator for a copy of it. Mail it back to the University of Alabama Office for Research Compliance, Box 870127, 358 Rose Administration Building, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127.

I have read this consent form. I have had a chance to ask questions. I understand what I will be asked to do. I freely agree to take part in it. I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature of Research Participant _____ Date _____

Date

Investigator _____ **Date** _____

Audio Taping Consent

The interviews will be audio recorded for research purposes to transcribe for further analysis. These tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked room and only available to the principal investigators. We will only keep these tapes for the duration of the study. The tapes will be destroyed once the study is completed.

I understand that my participation in this research study will be audiotaped and I give my permission to the research team to record the interview.

- Yes, my participation in the interview can be audiotaped.

No, I do not want my participation in the interview to be audiotaped.