St. John's University

2022

FROM ADMISSION TO GRADUATION: FINDING MEANING, ACHIEVEMENT, AND IDENTITY IN STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Sharod L. Tomlinson

FROM ADMISSION TO GRADUATION: FINDING MEANING,
ACHIEVEMENT, AND IDENTITY IN STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ST. JOHNS UNIVERSITY

New York

by

Sharod L. Tomlinson

Date Submitted: 12/13/2021   Date Approved: 5/17/2022

_____   _____

Sharod L. Tomlinson   Dr. Ceceilia Parnther

ABSTRACT

FROM ADMISSION TO GRADUATION: FINDING MEANING,
ACHIEVEMENT, AND IDENTITY IN STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

SHAROD L. TOMLINSON

Black and Latinx male students' college completion rates are much lower than their

White male peers. Mentoring is essential as it helps to cultivate students' college

aspirations, prepare them for a successful transition from high school to college, and

connect them to academic and social supports once on campus. Mentoring programs are a

useful way to support students as they matriculate in higher education settings. For Black

and Latinx students, the mentoring relationship can provide academic, social, and career

guidance that is invaluable during undergraduate years. Using qualitative narrative

research to explore how support programs impact the collegiate experiences Black and

Latinx males can help university leaders concentrate on implementing best practices and

consequently enhance the probability of increasing completion rates. This study's

researcher examined Black and Latinx males who successfully completed their freshmen

year at an urban Catholic university and their perception on how a student-faculty mentor

support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. The researcher

curated a narrative from the Black and Latinx male perspectives, providing insight to

student support program leaders and school administrators to attract, retain, and graduate

students underrepresented at higher education institutions. The study findings allow

students' voices and experiences to be heard by offering researchable and practical

insights into the necessary work to close the achievement gap for Black and Latinx

males.

DEDICATION

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. – Philippians 4:13

I dedicate this dissertation first and foremost to God who has given me the strength, grace and determination to complete this program and earn this degree. To my son Isaiah, Daddy is proud of you and always wants you to know that there is nothing in life that you cannot accomplish. I thank you for being understanding my schedule and being patient all those weekends you had to come to school with me. I dedicate this to you Amy Tomlinson, the best mom in the world. Thank you for your tireless support in word and in deeds. You have always been there when I needed you the most. Your late-night phone calls to make sure I made it home after working and then writing to 3am or 4am will never be forgotten. You have sacrificed so much for us throughout the years. I pray all we do continue to make you proud. My Brothers Jason & Will, you guys mean the world to me. From our childhood to now we have continued to persevere and overcome. Thank you, my brothers, for your unconditional love and support. As long as we keep our hands in God hands we are going to always prosper. Dad, thank you what you instilled in me. Your saying "I can do it if I want to, I can do it if I try" has remained with me. Auntie Cole, My voice of reason. What can I say? When I wanted to quit and throw in the towel you would hear me out and then continue to encourage me to keep going. Thank you for always responding to my text or taking my call. To my Bishop, Co-Pastor and church family I want to thank you for your prayers and continuous support. The Burgess Family, thank you all for being such a tremendous asset to my life. Without you all I would not be where I am today. Dad Burgess was the first Black men I saw in

education, and it inspired me to do all I can to contribute to the lives of young men and women in inner city schools and communities.

Dr. Stephanie Tatum, thank you for seeing in me, what I really didn't see in myself. Your support throughout this entire program will never be forgotten. Any graduate student is blessed to have you as their advisor. Dr. Parnther, you are a great demonstration of what a mentor looks like. Your wisdom, knowledge, patience, and positive disposition is what has helped me to persevere and get this all done. THANK YOU!!! To all of my St. John's University colleagues thank you for your support over these past few years. I am extremely grateful to work with you all. Last but certainly not least I would like to thank President, Dr. Michael A. Baston, Dr. Anthony Annunziato and Dr. Fahle for being on my committee and supporting my doctoral study.

The Best Is Yet To Come…

Dr. Sharod L. Tomlinson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 Current Population Survey show that the 21st century economy favors college graduates over those with only a high school diploma or general education development certificate. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) further indicated that most of the career positions made available between 2019–2029 will require a bachelor's degree at a minimum. The U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy (2016) published a report that showed many students of color do not receive a higher education in proportion to their White peers. Black students who pursued a 4-year college degree, particularly men, graduate at a much lower rate than White and Asian students. Graduation rates among Hispanic students also are somewhat lower than White and Asian students. In 2013–14, among men, the graduation rate gaps were vast. The graduation rate for Black men was about half the graduation rate for Asian men and 25 percentage points lower than White men, as the graduation rate for Hispanic men was 11 percentage points lower than White men.

In Fall 2018, 16.6 million undergraduate students were enrolled to attend universities across the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, [NCES], 2019). Black and Latinx students accounted for less than 50% of the undergraduate population, with Latinx representing 20% and Black students accounting for 13%. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 Population Survey showed that Latinx Americans are the largest ethnic minority, comprising an estimated 18% of the population. African Americans are the second largest racial minority, comprising an estimated 13.4% of the

population. Not only are students of color less likely to enroll in college, but they are also less likely to graduate. In 2019, the post-secondary graduation rates indicated that the 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students was 64% for White students, 54% for Latinx students, and 40% for Black students (NCES, 2019). These disparities are even starker when focusing on male students of color. In 2018, Black males made up only 38% and Latinx males represented 36% of the total undergraduate student enrollment (NCES, 2019). The 6-year graduation rate was 34% for Black males and 50% for Latinx males (NCES, 2019).

Because colleges and universities can serve as the gateway to social and economic mobility, it is imperative that they equitably support students of color. There are two areas in which equity efforts could be targeted to improve the experiences of students of color, which include: (a) enrollment in college and (b) persistence in college. This study's researcher focused on the latter, specifically in the context of male students of color.

Barriers to Academic Success

Men of color come to college campuses having experienced fewer educational opportunities than their peers as a result of systemic inequities. During K-12 education, Black and Latinx males are overrepresented in special education programs and juvenile justice systems and are underrepresented in gifted or college preparatory classes (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). They also experience harsher and more frequent school discipline infractions (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). Due to these and other barriers, boys of color have the lowest K-12 school attendance rates, and perhaps most important, the lowest levels of personal stability and support, relative to other groups. These factors

decrease their overall college readiness and opportunities for success on the higher education level, as well as contribute to the well-established academic achievement gap between them and their White peers (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016).

According to Brooks et al. (2013), college campuses are designed and structured to meet the needs of a predominantly White student body, and they do not account for the cultural differences that exist in a diverse student body, resulting in Black and Latinx students encountering a different set of challenges relating to academic persistence and success than would normally be encountered by traditional college students. Greer and Brown's (2011) indicated that students of color felt underrepresented as well as out of place and even unwelcomed within college campuses. Students of color navigating their academic journeys have had to deal with microaggressions, discrimination, and racism from faculty, administrators, and staff, which have impacted their academic performance and mental health (Nadal et al., 2014).

Many researchers have explored how such structural barriers prohibit the academic success among Black and Latinx male students relative to White students and lead to gaps in academic performance in college and degree attainment (Hall, 2017; Laird et al., 2004; Strayhorn, 2008). Scholars have raised awareness regarding the underrepresentation, social isolation, cultural incongruence, academic hurdles, and racism that Black and Latinx male students endure on predominantly White campuses (Allen, 1992; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Feagin et al., 1996; Fleming, 1984; Fries-Britt, 1998, 2004; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001, 2002; Gossett et al., 1996; Strayhorn, 2009). Financial barriers are one of many stressors that Black and Latinx males face as they

come from a low-income household and are placed on academic tracks that require them to spend more time in school (Carter, 2013).

A shift must take place in the mindset of university leaders, and their focus must move from increasing enrollment of Black and Latinx males to improve the experiences, persistence, and completion of Black and Latinx males (Hall, 2017). By doing so, university leaders need to be intentional in implementing strategies with an asset-based mindset and messaging. There is evidence that some colleges and universities are attempting to address these challenges (Brooks et al., 2013). There has been a notable increase in these Black and Latinx students' college completion rate (Shapiro et al., 2017). Completion rates increased by 1.6 percentage points to 47.6% for Black students and 1.7 percentage points to 57.4% for Latinx students. While the numbers are up overall, experts say completion rates remain far too low and can vary widely depending on what type of school students attend (Nadworny, E., 2019).

Impact of Mentoring and Support Programs on Academic Persistence

Mentoring is essential as it helps to cultivate students' college aspirations, prepare them for a successful transition from high school to college, and connect them to academic and social support once on campus (Blacknall & Coles, 2011). Over the past few decades, mentoring has emerged as a significant retention initiative in undergraduate educational experience (Asgari & Carter, 2016; Kodama, 2015). For Black and Latinx students, the mentoring relationship can provide academic, social, and career guidance that is invaluable during the undergraduate years (Booker & Brevard, 2017). Booker and Brevard conducted a study on 90 students of color in a freshmen yearlong Mentoring

Matters Program at a predominantly White institution (PWI) in the Southeastern United States, and most students felt the mentoring they received helped them to adjust to university life. Academic concerns, personal concerns, and career guidance were the topics most students discussed with their mentors.

Phinney et al. (2011) conducted a study with Latinx freshmen undergraduate population in an urban university aiming to enhance college performance through mentoring. Their results outlined that having a good mentoring relationship was associated with having more time with a mentor and predicted the mentee's sense of belonging to the university. Phinney et al. also remarked on the fact that mentors who established rapport with their mentees and spent time with them made a positive impact in psychosocial factors underlying academic performance of Latinx freshmen.

For minority students, mentors can provide genuine concern for their welfare, practice cultural sensitivity, and appreciate the unique individuality of the protégé (Knouse, 2013). Culture plays a strong role in shaping the mentoring functions that protégés desire (Cox et al., 2014). To gain empathy with mentees, mentors rely on similar experiences to understand mentees' issues (Bohannon & Bohannon, 2015). The specific values and goals that come from these experiences play an important role in defining the mentoring relationship.

It is apparent that college and university administrators have a broad understanding of the Black and Latinx male experience, but what works to remove barriers to completion for this population of students needs to be further explored. What issues and barriers do Black and Latinx males experience? What supports and services

from colleges and universities had the most significant impact on those students during their academic journey? At what point during their academic career was the support the most meaningful and or needed? The aforementioned studies show that mentoring can support Black and Latinx students. This research is important as it describes how Black and Latinx male mentees understand and experience mentoring relationships as a part of their success in college. This dissertation research provided a voice for men of color who have experienced college differently. The study also provided an opportunity for additional discussions on the best practices college and university faculty and administrators should employ to engage, retain, and graduate Black and Latinx males at a higher rate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the perception of Black and Latinx males at different academic levels who participated in a student-faculty mentoring program at a private urban Catholic university to understand their experiences and investigate the specific elements from their participation that led to positive impacts on their engagement levels and academic attainment. In this study, perceptions from Black and Latinx male program participants provided insight to leaders and school administrators to attract, retain, and graduate students who are underrepresented at higher education institutions.

This study involved investigating how successful Black and Latinx males enrolled, retained, and persist toward graduation. A qualitative research design was the preferred method because it empowered the research participants to share their

experiences. Qualitative research designs also provide more detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants rather than the survey completion and analyzing statistical data found in quantitative research studies (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research methods provide insight into the meaning behind their experiences and encourage students to freely provide an unqualified assessment of campus life (Manning, 1989).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that supported this study was Phinney's theory of ethnic and racial identity development. Ethnic and racial identity (ERI) is defined as a multidimensional, psychological construct that reflects the beliefs and attitudes that individuals have about their ethnic or racial group memberships, as well as the processes by which these beliefs and attitudes develop over time (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Racial identity is used, for example, when the groups being investigated are considered racial (e.g., Black) and ethnic when the group is considered ethnic (e.g., Latinx), or if the measure used is labeled as racial (e.g., Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity; Sellers et al., 1997) or ethnic (e.g., Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, Phinney, 1992).

Understanding ethnic and racial identity is important for adolescents for the following reasons: (a) to serve as a buffering mechanism from attacks on ethnic identity (Romero et al., 2013; Stuart & Jose, 2014; Torres & Ong, 2014); (b) to make informed ethnic identity decisions and to make connections to their ethnic groups, and (c) to know how their ethnic groups have contributed significantly to the very societies that devalue

them (Whittaker, 2018). Present and future generations of children of color may continue to avoid their ethnic group because knowledge related to their ethnic group is ignored or denigrated in school (Branch, 2004).

Critically, this theory hypothesizes that all students belonging to Black and Latinx groups experience conflict because of their membership in those groups. During the time that students attend their colleges/ universities, they experience threats to their identities, stereotyping, and prejudicial treatment. Students must critically examine their racial or ethnic identity to successfully resolve the threats. According to Phinney (1992), all Black and Latinx students go through a period of discovery and defining themselves through cultural lenses. Phinney developed a model that features three stages including: (a) diffusion-foreclosure, (b) moratorium, and (c) identity achievement. In stage 1, unexamined ethnic identity, an individual may present characteristics within one of two categories; diffusion, where the person has not experienced their identity as an issue or conflict; the stage is also referred to as foreclosure. Here an individual aligns themselves with the perceptions of their ethnic and racial identity as explained to them from family members and peers. Black and Latinx adolescents in this stage generally accept the social norms and values or the majority culture without question. Individuals in this stage accept information without conducting an independent analysis of their own feelings. Stage 2, ethnic identity search, also referred to as moratorium, is defined by a conflict or impactful event that causes an individual to become more aware of their own ethnicity. This is often a shocking experience that changes an individual's worldview. As a result, exploration of identity occurs during this time, as the individual actively seeks out information related to

their identity. Stage 3, ethnic identity achievement, is a stage where an individual emerges from a search for identity with a positive identity development. This is marked by recognition of one's own ethnicity and an awareness and appreciation of the identities of others. In this stage, individuals recognize and accept the differences between their culture, the majority culture, and other cultures as well.

Student support programs use this model to help develop safe places and other educational opportunities that provide guidance for Black and Latinx students. This framework helped to facilitate an understanding regarding the impact of mentoring of Black and Latinx male students who share their racial or ethnic identities. In addition, this theoretical framework was used to learn about how students' respective cultures are implemented within their academic and social experience at their respective college/ universities (see Long, 2012).

Significance/Importance of the Study

This study's researcher described the perceptions and factors contributing to the persistence of Black and Latinx male students within a first-year support program to gain more insight on what is necessary to increase the graduation rates of these student subgroups. Insights needed to be gathered from those who managed to navigate their way to and through higher education, despite all that is stacked against them—low teacher expectations, insufficient academic preparation for college-level work, racist and culturally unresponsive campus environments, and the debilitating consequences of severe underrepresentation (Harper & Williams, 2013). This study's findings uncovers information on Black and Latinx male perceptions about how a student-faculty mentor

support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. This will help leaders at the university make strategic decisions in order to attract, retain, and graduate students underrepresented at higher education institutions. It will also help the broader community of colleges and universities reflect critically on their own programming and discover ways to empower the voices and experiences of these male students to be heard by offering researchable and practical insights into the necessary work to close the achievement gap for Black and Latinx males with the end goal of improving persistence for them.

Connection With Social Justice and/ or Vincentian Mission in Education

Social justice is often described in terms of fair resource allocation and equitable treatment of all members of society (Miller & Murray, 2001). Fair allocation of resources refers to the provision of adequate and equal access to economic resources, opportunities, power, and privileges. Inequitable treatment occurs when some members and segments of society are valued, affirmed, and extended a socially privileged position, while others are denigrated, marginalized, or viewed as expendable. Social justice requires affording all members fair treatment, positive social regard, and clear processes for accessing societal resources (Tolan et al., 2017).

According to Sinanan (2016), universities and their academic environments are described as an unfamiliar place with a different set of expectations than what are experienced in high school. The narratives of Black and Latinx males transitioning into postsecondary education in this study represent the first person in their immediate family to attend college, and they are likely to come from low-income backgrounds (see Butler,

2013). It is said that the United States is the land of opportunity, a place where all who are willing to work to thrive and get ahead and live a fulfilling life can do so, yet economic mobility is greater in other countries. Leaders in the United States have significant work to do to in order to provide a world-class education that can help to ensure that all children in this country with dreams and determination can reach their potential and succeed (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). This study serves as a point of information and advocacy in support of the retention and success of Black and Latinx male students in higher education.

Research Questions

This research describes how Black and Latinx male mentees understand and experience mentoring relationships as a part of their success in college. Specifically, the study's researcher sought to understand how the relationship is understood and experienced by these students at a private, Catholic PWI.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What features of mentoring are identified by students as impactful to their collegiate experience?

      a) How do these features inform the behavior within, approach to, and connection to the mentor within the mentoring relationship?

      b) How do these behaviors and approaches influence the student perception of the value of the mentoring program?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do Black and Latinx males describe the role that race plays in the dynamics and value of the mentoring relationship?

Methods

Narrative research is defined as collecting and analyzing the accounts people tell to describe experiences and provide clarification (Josselson, 2011). Narrative research provides an option to explore personal experiences beyond the limitations of a questionnaire, providing insight into faculty-student mentoring, academic curriculum, social experiences, or campus culture, which can help guide how support services are developed and provided (Creswell, 2013). In order to gain insight into the participants' world, narrative interview questions were designed, guided by ERI (Phinney, 1992) and relevant literature of student retention for Black and Latinx males to reveal each individual's experiences with cross-cultural student-faculty mentoring, as male students of color in a nonaffinity based mentoring program. Narrative research is empowering to both the storyteller and those who seek to enhance student success initiatives.

Definition of Terms

Black: The term was used to describe students who self-report as Black or African American.

First-generation student: A college student whose parents or guardians did not earn a college degree (Libassi, 2018).

Latinx: A student of Latin or Latin American descent (NCES, 2014).

Mentee: An individual who receives support and guidance, typically from a senior individual who invests in the development of the mentee (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2017).

Mentor: A person who oversees the personal and professional growth of another person through support and guidance (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2017).

Mentorship (mentoring): Receiving the advice or counsel of an older and more experienced individual (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2017).

Predominantly White institution: A college or university where more than 50% of the student population is Caucasian (Sinanan, 2016).

Retention: The process of retaining or assisting a student in persisting from one academic year (or semester) to the next (Schelbe et al., 2019).

White or Caucasian: Used interchangeably refers to an individual who is European descent and does not self-identify with any other racial or ethnic categories.

Summary

This study's research focused on collecting narratives of Black and Latinx male students in a student support-mentoring program. Exploring their stories provided insight to student support program leaders and school administrators to attract, retain and graduate underrepresented students in higher education. Gaining insight into the experiences of Black and Latinx male students in the Top Scholars Mentoring Program (TSMP) at CHEN University, a series of narrative interview questions (see Appendix B) were used to guide the individual interviews. Narrative interviews are often organized in the style of a life story (Given, 2008) and open-ended narrative questions are the most enlightening in terms of individual participants expressing information about their experiences (Rallis & Rossman, 2003). This study offers insight on the work and research that is necessary to close the achievement gap for Black and Latinx males.

CHAPTER 2

The narrative stories of Black and Latinx males collegiate social and academic experiences; as well as their successful completion of their degree programs from the university are not expressed enough. The majority of researchers have focused on the maladjustments and the many factors that prevent Black and Latinx males from succeeding (Harper, 2003, 2006a; Palmer et al., 2011). The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the perception of Black and Latinx males at different academic levels who are participating in a student support program at private urban Catholic university to understand their experiences and investigate the specific elements from their participation that led to positive impacts on their engagement levels and academic attainment. More specifically, the study aim was to understand how the students understand, navigate, and experience mentoring as it relates to their racial identity development. In this chapter, the researcher provides an overview of the theory that guided this study as well as literature related to the topic.

Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework was Phinney's ethnic and racial identity development ERIERID) as it applies to all Black and Latinx racial or ethnic groups. This theory supports that all students belonging to Black and Latinx groups experience conflict because of their membership in a Black and Latinx group. ERID is correlated with self-esteem and belongingness for non-White, adolescent and young adult students, regardless of how the students identify (Phinney, 1992). For this reason, quantitative measures such as the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measures are well recognized and respected in social

science research. Student support programs use this model to help develop safe places and other educational opportunities that provide guidance for Black and Latinx students. As referenced in Chapter 1, Phinney developed three stage model. In stage 1, unexamined ethnic identity, an individual may present characteristics within one of two categories; diffusion, where the person has not experienced their identity as an issue or conflict, the stage is also referred to as foreclosure. Here an individual aligns themselves with the perceptions of their ethnic and racial identity as explained to them from family members and peers. Black and Latinx adolescents in this stage generally accept the social norms and values or the majority culture without question. Individuals in this stage accept information without independent analysis of their own feelings. Stage 2, ethnic identity search, also referred to as moratorium, is defined by a conflict or impactful event that causes an individual to become more aware of their own ethnicity. This is often a shocking experience that changes an individual's worldview. As a result, exploration of identity occurs during this time, as the individual actively seeks out information related to their identity. Stage 3, ethnic identity achievement, is a stage where an individual emerges from a search for identity with a positive identity development. This is marked by a recognition of one's own ethnicity and an awareness and appreciation of the identities of others. In this stage, individuals recognize and accept the differences between their culture, the majority culture, and other cultures as well.

ERID is defined as a multidimensional, psychological construct that reflects the beliefs and attitudes that individuals have about their ethnic–racial group memberships, as well as the processes by which these beliefs and attitudes develop over time (Umaña-

15

Taylor et al., 2014. Understanding ethnic identity is important for adolescents for the following reasons: (a) to serve as a buffering mechanism from attacks on ethnic identity (Romero et al., 2013; Stuart & Jose, 2014; Torres & Ong, 2014); (b) to make informed ethnic identity decisions and to make connections to their ethnic groups; and (c) to know how their ethnic groups have contributed significantly to the very societies that devalue them (Whittaker, 2018). Present and future generations of children of color may continue to avoid their ethnic group because knowledge related to their ethnic group is ignored or denigrated in school (Branch, 2004).

Exploring how Black and Latinx male students make meaning of the intersection of their own identity development and their perceptions of the supports available in a mentoring program refined a collective understanding of how support programs can be responsive to the needs to students navigating various stages of ERID. Racial identity is used, for example, when the groups being investigated are considered racial (e.g., Black) and ethnic when the group is considered ethnic (e.g., Latinx; Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014), or if the measure used is labeled as racial (e.g., multidimensional inventory of Black identity; Sellers et al., 1997) or ethnic (e.g., Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, Phinney, 1992). For the purposes of the study, ERI was used because the study participants self-identify as Black or Latinx, and because the researcher aimed to understand the stories that describe the role and value of the mentoring program and how the meaning assigned to the program is understood from students bearing these identities.

The ERI framework has been used in related research to reveal the experiences of students and the need for social support in college. A narrative analysis by Phinney and

Haas (2003) depicted first generation college students whose ability to cope with college stressors was dependent on their perceptions of social support. The findings of their study reveal that students felt alone navigating challenges for two reasons. First, the students indicated that they lacked the social capital to actively navigate college, and second, the network they did have was ill equipped to provide advice. These concerns led to students feeling alone and overwhelmed. The study's findings illustrate a cultural story of a student's experience in a mentoring program and how they make meaning of the experience as a Black or Latinx male. A review of this and other literature considers whether support programs and existing models are promising approaches that support Black and Latinx male development academically, socially and as a measure of racial and ethnic identity.

Review of Related Literature

As the access to higher education increases for diverse groups, research and practice to provide student support has steadily increased. Institutions continuously introduce a growing number of strategies to promote academic success, retention, and graduation, specifically for underprivileged students in education. Despite this, Black and Latinx males experience lower collegiate success levels compared to their counterparts by both race and gender. For this study, the researcher viewed collegiate success as multifaceted including retention, graduation, and general satisfaction with the college experience. With the growing abundance of different academic platforms that support these students, many believe that achieving equity occurs in many ways. These support programs and models have proliferated in the past few years to address the low rate of

completion among Black and Latinx males compared to their counterparts in academic institutions.

There is a large amount of research that describes promising practices for Black and Latinx male student retention. These include:

(a) implementing early alert systems, (b) providing high-impact professional development for faculty and staff, (c) ensuring a higher representation of full-time faculty in developmental education, (d) increasing support for part-time faculty, (e) integrating equity goals and efforts into institutional strategic plans, (f) hiring educators with a proven commitment to underserved students, and (g) engaging college educators in collective sense-making around student equity issues and concerns. (Harris et al., 2017, p. 2)

Libassi (2018) capitulated that gaps in education are systemically related to disparate opportunities. Libassi argued that despite students being first-time/ first generation or have grown up underprivileged; they have the mindset to obtain a degree as showcased by the higher rates of enrollment. While there has been work to increase enrollment numbers and completion rates, there is a need for university leaders and policymakers to pay close attention to the opportunities offered to Black and Latinx males and how welcoming institutions' staff and faculty are to students from underrepresented communities. Libassi (2018) offered specific recommendations that policymakers can implement to ensure Black and Latinx males receive the opportunities they deserve which include:

A. Establish data systems that are able to track college outcomes by race to find out if students of color are pursuing certain majors initially only to switch later, and what career fields students are steering clear of.

B. Examine pricing and advertising of various majors. With affordability being a consistent issue for students of color, if pricing differentiates by major/ department in which it is offered, students of color would be dissuaded to take courses in high priced departments such as engineering (Libassi, 2018; Stange, 2015).

C. Impact of introductory courses. Are the introductory courses offered to weed out certain students? In a survey of 400 top department chairs, it was stated that those responding to the study felt these practices are harmful to diversity (Libassi, 2018; Mervis, 2011).

There has been a long history of exclusion among Black, Latinx, and White degree recipients. Libassi (2018) examined the credentials of each racial group by institution sector, degree level, and major. The university that students choose to attend and the resources that are made available to those students have an impact on their academic experience. During the years of 2013–2015, White students earned degrees from public and nonprofit universities at higher rates than Black and Latinx, while Black and Latinx had higher completions rates at for-profit universities. Assessing the employment and earnings of for-profit college students using administrative data, Libassi (2018) shared that students attending for-profit college can be in a worse predicament than those not attending college at all. The number of Black and Latinx students

receiving their credentials from this academic sector gives insight into the comparative risk and inequalities within education (Libassi, 2018). Federal data indicates that if Black and Latinx student had graduation rates comparable to White students, over one million students would now be degree holders. Beyond graduation, higher debt and default risk impacts students who do not complete. Students who have attended private for-profit colleges recorded the worst default rates across all institution types. One-third of all borrowers defaulted within 6 years of starting at a private for-profit institution, including 42% of Black borrowers (Miller & Murray, 2019).

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS, 2018) showed that White students receive degrees from schools that spend more per student than their Black and Latinx counterparts. Universities attended by White students spend nearly $16,000, whereas top schools attended by Black and Latinx students only spend $13,000-$14,000 per student, a difference of 16 to 20% in spending. According to Schelbe et al. (2019), first generation students' grit and resilience must also be highlighted as they enter college campuses overcoming substantial obstacles. First generation students are enrolling at higher rates; college and university administrations have recognized that and notice the different challenges and needs of these students compared to their peers (Stebleton et al., 2014).

Support Programs

To fully establish what can be done to improve programs that are dedicated to Black and Latinx males, it is important to note what spurred the attention to the Black and Latinx males. According to Bowleg (2017), what transpired in the 2016 United States

presidential election commanded what could be referred to as the "Obama effect." Being a figure that represents a myriad of positive characteristics, Obama's appearance in American politics contributed to counterweigh what was previously thought of Black males. The perception of Black males is that benefits and opportunity are geared toward White males (Taylor et al., 2019). As Obama rose in politics, so did his character as a role model, hence the term "Obama effect," which elevated the perceived social standing of Black men. When examining Black men's perceptions of themselves after President Barack Obama's 2008 election, 577 Black males participated in a survey. In response to the question, "How often have you felt that this is a good time to be a Black man now that Barack Obama is President?" 32% said "never/rarely," 23% said "sometimes," and 45% said "often" (Bowleg et al., 2010). In a 2016 nationally representative survey in which 65% of Black respondents compared to only 27% of Whites, agreed that "It is a lot more difficult to be Black in this country than it is to be White" (Maniam, 2016). Black respondents (62%) also agreed that "White people benefit a great deal from advantages in society that Black people do not have," a statement with which only 13% of Whites agreed (Bowleg, 2017).

Further exploring the perceptions Black and Latinx males might have, Harris et al. (2017) explored the educational system's possible systematic and structural challenges. In addition to low completion rates, Black and Latinx male students faced barriers during their educational experience that included marginalization and alienation according to Harris et al.'s review of California Community College Chancellor's Office Student Success Scorecard. When evaluating the 2009–2015, 6-year time frame, only 27.4% and

17.2% of Black men will ever complete their developmental education sequence in English and math. These outcomes are 15.1 and 13.1 percentage points lower than that of their peers. The disparities help to contextualize developmental education shortcomings to move Black and Latinx males to college-level course work (Harris et al., 2017). Additional challenges facing this vulnerable population include homelessness and those re-entering civilization from military services or incarceration. Black and Latinx males face challenges such as caring for dependents, handling stressful life events, transportation concerns, and working to contribute to family finances.

An important consideration of this study is the rate of non-completion of education among Black and Latinx males in a study conducted among community colleges in California. The dropout rate reveals the institution's ineffectiveness to implement successful interventions among the student body. The outcome is an increased number of Black and Latinx students deciding not to persist and complete their education regardless of the competitive society's demanding growth, demanding more highly educated individuals. These groups would not have the full advantage of seizing these academic and professional opportunities. In connection, these students of color are subjected to external factors limiting their social mobility. Such concerns, which range from commuting challenges to accommodations worry, invariably coincide with the students' completion rate. As efforts were continuously dedicated, there were still some loopholes within the administration. The way of addressing the issue may not be thorough enough or the key variables may not be properly identified as evidenced by

plans, which fall short in identifying specific identification of target variables (Harris et al., 2017).

In a case study conducted among college students in three higher education institutions, Druery (2018) established the possible underlying factors to consider when addressing issues affecting the academic experience of minorities. Black and Latinx males encounter societal, academic, and cultural problems that are rarely experienced by other college students that impend their success (Brooks et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2008); these challenges include: (a) underrepresentation (Palmer et al., 2014; Strayhorn, 2010); isolation (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper & Williams, 2013); (b) stereotype threat and racism (Smith et al., 2011; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001); and (c) racism. These challenges manage to impede the enrollment, academic achievement, persistence, engagement, and college completion of Black and Latinx male students (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms, 2016; Cuyjet, 2006; Harper & Williams, 2013; Strayhorn, 2008). Brooms et al. (2015) stated that the challenges these students encounter have great impact on their college experience. Druery's (2018) study revealed demands have to be answered, ranging from academic possibilities to the potential for self-improvement. Utilizing the framework of belongingness, Druery concluded that education presented to Black and Latinx males exhibit a higher rate of success provided that these students are made aware of their place in the society. Hodge (2017) demonstrated that persisting through a college diploma is a product of service programs specially designed to cater to the holistic needs of Black and Latinx populations. The rate of success proves the notion that a deliberate, well-implemented functional design supports academic achievement.

Harper and Williams (2013) conducted focus groups in order to gather the perceptions from students. During this time, more than 30 student focus groups with Black men, Latinx, and White men at community colleges at the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society national convention, as well as six focus groups with faculty and staff occurred. One major finding from the focus groups conducted was personal connections. Relationships with faculty, staff, and fellow students are essential. Students value having a sense of belonging and someone who believes in them. Students discussed the power of a formal or informal network on campus that includes peers, instructors, advisors, and/or mentors. One recurring theme was the value of someone the student respects and who makes time when the student needs help. Students highlighted the value of relationships when they discuss the advice, they would give to someone like them who is about to start college (Center of Community College Student Engagement, 2014). Students stressed over and over again the importance of having a mentor, a reliable source of information and support. For example, one student said, "Get peer mentorship, and if you're aware of the services that are offered, you can find that. And if they don't have it, start it" (Center of Community College Student Engagement, 2014, p. 9).

Student Preparedness

One exciting topic among researchers is the level of preparedness students from higher academic institutions demonstrate concerning performance and success in education. As there are varying ways to gauge achievements and developments, there are different propositions about what contributes to the overall engagement capacity and willingness of students to incorporate them in the academic field. Nagaoka et al.

(2013) stated how crucial and volatile factors are toward resolving this matter. Their study emphasized that there is a need for educators to incorporate student recognition within the academic experience. The preparedness of learners has been gradually paving the way to meet the needs of college readiness. In line with this, concentration has been leveraged in ironing out academic demands and fostering growth outside the classroom; specifically in higher education (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016; Harper & Williams, 2013; Salinitri, 2015).

Vital elements were identified as key contributors to student readiness, which encompass hard skills, strategies, and models of behaviors. This framework proposed the correlation among contributory factors within the context of education as interpreted in varied ways through which the end goal is not the readiness itself. The recognition of the demands of being a student as have to be met. Preparation does not end at one point; it is an accumulation of these details and contributing factors. Gardenhire and Cerna (2016) categorized five factors that are necessary to the success of Black and Latinx males. They were:

A. Academic advising and counseling includes help from professional advisers and counselors to create course-specific, sequenced pathways for earning a degree or certificate, navigating academic and social hurdles, and accessing available campus resources to support student success.

B. Academic and study skills training primarily includes tutoring and study halls.

C. Leadership training encompasses opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership in planning events and activities, community service, and managing or coordinating group meetings.

D. Mentoring includes both peer-to-peer and adult-to-peer mentoring relationships that foster a sense of inclusion, support students, and provide them with advice or guidance on how to resolve academic or personal issues.

E. Special events or workshops encompass guest speakers, special presentations, conferences, and meetings on topics related to identity and student success. (p. 3)

Over the past few years, addressing the disproportionate challenges faced by Black and Latinx males garnered several perspectives and recognition. The recognition of this concern positively led to the rise of several initiatives that encourage equality among citizens in different aspects of society. The leverage lent by higher educational standards could be altered, if not restructured (Wood, 2017). There are more institutions of learning can do to incorporate Black and Latinx males in the educational success' sphere. As with every other student, student support services have to be equitably presented for the goal of higher education to be achieved, which is academic success. Wood also emphasized the underlying factors in which educators must dedicate greater emphasis and authenticity of actions as these clearly outline the guidelines that may contribute toward performance and achievement. Fundamentally, for higher education institutions to fully implement a sound support system, there has to be validation in different student support service departments. Academic institutions have to provide means of support to everyone

to safeguard success. Similarly, there has to be enough room for challenges that encourage the growth of everyone enrolled within colleges/ universities.

Higher education institutions must be able to foster fundamental care for the students, in this case, the Black and Latinx males. There must be clear understanding on what expectations are being formed for all students. If these four key responsibilities are not achieved most of the time, disparities occur. As varying levels of interests were recently directed toward identifying with the men who are categorized as minorities or students of color, different educational practices have proven or believed to be an extension of the racial disparities and segregations being adopted and utilized within society. Advocacy will be necessary by families on behalf of their students to inform the education system of ways their children can be successful at all levels. These include increasing access to high quality education, early childhood programs, expansion to high quality bilingual education, in addition to allocating resources that increase capacity for teachers to deliver gap-closing, evidence-based learning. Failure to do so only increases the racial and ethnic segregation that impacts the educational experience of Black and Latinx males (APA, 2012).

Mentoring Black and Latinx Males

Institutions across the United States implemented Black male initiatives (BMI) to support the academic and social experiences of Black males, while also aiming to increase retention and completion rates (Brooms, 2017, 2018; Brooms et al., 2015; Harper & Kuykendall, 2012). Brooms and Druery (2019) studied the impact of Black Male Leaderships Connection (BMLC) programs. There has been an increase in studies

on Black males in college and their engagement on campus over the past 2 decades (Druery & Brooms, 2019; Palmer et al., 2014; Wood & Palmer, 2015). Strayhorn (2012) stated that when Black and Latinx males are engaged on campus, they have a greater sense of belonging. The involvement and participation within student organizations on campus allows Black and Latinx males to gain leadership skillsets and experiences, which can result in them being socially integrated and persisting academically (Harper & Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008). Black and Latinx males who take the initiative to create organizations in order to support each other increase persistence, foster safe spaces, and increase belongingness on campus (Brooms, 2016, 2017, 2018; Sutton & Terrell, 1997). In addition to the presence of student organizations, mentoring programs are formed. For nearly 2 decades, BMI programs have been structured as social initiatives within campus communities to nurture social and academic success (Brooms, 2017, 2018; Brooms et al., 2015). In most cases, programs are developed with staff or faculty support (i.e., program advisors, faculty advisors, or program coordinators), and in some cases programs are supported by upperclassmen that serve as peer mentors. Each program design maybe different as some use cohort models based upon student classifications, while some other programs are program based on requiring a certain number of events to be attended by students (Druery & Brooms, 2019). Barker and Avery (2012) evaluated how BMI-type programs impacted academic and social integration of Black male students within colleges and universities. The focus was to examine (a) how the program impacted persistence of Black male students during and beyond the first year and (b) the unique experiences between first year and second year students participating in the program.

28

Baker and Avery's study findings indicated that BMI programs created a space for students to engage in positive peer relationships and have a better understanding of their race and gender (Druery & Brooms, 2019). BMI programs are essential for the success of Black male students, as they not only increase retention, but they also provide various forms of support, and create opportunities to build relationship with their peers, faculty and staff (Barker & Avery, 2012; Druery & Brooms, 2019; Palmer et al., 2014).

In order to keep students engaged within the program, students have scheduled meetings, lectures, and discussion-based workshops, retreats, student leadership conferences, civic engagement events, and group travel opportunities (Druery & Brooms, 2019). Race and social justice issues are encountered by Black males during their college experience, so BMI programs offer students opportunities to have necessary conversations surrounding education, race, class, gender, masculinity, spirituality, intersectionality, and societal issues to increase knowledge and awareness of what it means to be a Black man in the United States (Brooms, 2017; Brooms et al., 2015).

GenOne

Schelbe et al. (2019) conducted a study to address the retention and academic performance gaps between first year students and their peers to help the stakeholders of the university and the GenOne program. The purpose of GenOne was to increase retention rates and improve the academic performance of first-generation students. GenOne consists of 1,500 students, majority of them are Black and Latinx who are enrolled at a large public university in the southeast region of the country.

Support

One of the emerging themes from the data was support. Students reported that connectivity with GenOne staff and the ambassadors made them feel like they were a part of a family. Students found great value in developing relationships with people who care and took the extra time to check on them periodically. Support of GenOne was a critical part of why they remained at the university. One student went on to share,

> I was failing two or three of my classes. And I was going through a lot emotionally and I was in counseling. And I think that [staff] pulling the student aside—which is what they did with me—and talking through it and giving me an action plan to execute and meeting up again to check in really helps. And that's definitely what kept me here and what's keeping other people here (Schelbe et al. 2019).

Expectations

Black and Latinx males that have dismal college enrollments rates, disengagement and underachievement, and low rates of baccalaureate degree completion are among the most pressing and complex issues in American higher education. Black and Latinx males have been held to lower expectations than their counter parts (Harper & Williams, 2013). "They don't let you go easy," one student said referring to GenOne staff discouraging students from leaving school. Students succeed when standards are raised, challenges are received, and they feel supported by administrators. A participant within GenOne went on to say,

I know stepping out of my comfort zone was something good for me. But

[GenOne] pushed me to be more vocal and meet new people and join

organizations. So that is what I did. I'm grateful that they did push me to do that

(Schelbe et al. 2019).

Preparation and Resources

Early intervention and engagement are important to the academic and social

experience of minority males. Students reported that by living in the dorms for the

Summer Bridge program, they were able to be more independent while having structure

that was supportive. "GenOne Staff moved mountains for us and put resources out there

to guide me in the right direction" was the response of a program participant when asked

about resources made available to them (Schelbe et al. 2019). Scholarships, student

support services, and access to university leadership while advocating on the behalf of

students were key contributors to their retention and completion (Schelbe et al., 2019).

Overall, students credited their success and retention to the support, expectations,

preparation, and resources that they received through the GenOne program. Universities

must focus on offering supportive programming for students during their time in college,

building a welcoming community, providing mentoring, and facilitating students' skill

development to meet their higher expectations (Schelbe et al., 2019). When programs are

anchored in the development of foundational skills among the learners, the propensity of

academic completion is higher regardless of the times the student has been enrolled at the

university. This means that learners' exposure to the academic field does not necessarily

reflect the corresponding rate of success or completion. Whether the students are the first

generation to attend college or have gone through the passing of the practices, retention

rate and success are still products of interwoven support from academic stakeholders.

Challenges Facing Black and Latinx males in Higher Education

Within higher education mentoring is a purposeful relationship built between

mentor(s) and mentee(s), which the mentor(s) serves as a guide to help their mentee(s)

navigate their academic, professional, and social experience (LaVant et al., 1997).

Anderson (1997) defined acculturative stress as an observed threat to one's cultural

beliefs and values; Black and Latinx males develop a unique vulnerability to

psychological anguish. In this state, students feel they must abandon their own values and

traditions, to conform to those values and traditions of the campus community. Students

who have experienced acculturative stress reported feeling depressed, having low self-

esteem, and dealing with academic difficulties (Constantine et al., 2004). These

challenges along with low retention and completion rates reflect the impact of racism and

systematic injustice on the educational experience for Black and Latinx males (Brooms,

2017). Black and Latinx males cannot continue to experience isolation, alienation, racial

stereotypes, and unsupportive relationships with faculty and staff (Palmer et al., 2014;

Smith et al., 2017). One way to address these negative experiences according to Benley-

Edwards and Chapman-Hillard (2015), is racial cohesion (e.g., racial identity, behaviors,

relationships, and interest), which is the groundwork to build resilience, positive racial

considerations, achievement, and social responsibility in college. College and university

administrators have implemented mentoring programs to serve as a mechanism to

increase retention and completion rates among Black and Latinx males. Those who are

engaged within mentoring programs are more likely to have new experiences, take

constructive criticism, and develop critical thinking and cognitive skills (Whitfield &

Edwards, 2011). The Tiered Mentoring Program (TMP) started at Compton Community

College in an effort to assist all new students (Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008). The mentors

within TMP provide a welcoming environment to help new students as they transition

into the college, leadership, guidance, and support (Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008). Montgomery

County Community College created a mentoring program to address their retention issues

among young Black and Latinx males, and as a result, the program had higher retention

numbers of Black and Latinx males within the program than those who were not a part of

the mentoring program (Bass, 2011).

The culturally engaging campus environment (CECE) model also provides insight

into the ways students surrounded in culturally relevant environments enhance their sense

of belongingness on campus (Museus & Ravello, 2010). The first four indicators include:

(a) cultural familiarity, opportunities to connect with individuals with whom they share

common knowledge; (b) culturally relevant knowledge, opportunities for students to

cultivate, sustain, and increase knowledge of their cultures and communities; (c) cultural

community service, students are provided spaces and tools to give back to and positively

transform their cultural communities; and (d) opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural

engagement, positive and purposeful interactions with diverse peers can have a positive

impact on college experiences and success. The other five indicators of CECEs include:

(a) collectivist cultural orientations, collectivist as opposed to more individualist cultural

orientations; (b) culturally validating environments, validating students' cultural

backgrounds and identities; (c) humanized educational environments, institutional agents who care about, are committed to, and develop meaningful relationships with students; (d) proactive philosophies, faculty and staff make extra efforts to bring information and support to students; and (e) availability of holistic support, provide students with access to one or more faculty or staff members that will provide them with information, help, and sup- port they need.

The large mixed methods study conducted by Druery and Brooms (2019) involved individual surveys and group interviews to examine academic, social, and engagement experiences of Black men at Pierce State University, located in the southeastern region of the United States. The researchers recruited students within the study by using the purposive sampling approach, and the data collected occurred in three phases. Twenty-five students completed surveys to complete the first phase of this project. Following that, 21 students participated in one-on-one interviews, and the final phase included a focus group interview with five students. The goal of this study was to investigate: (a) how students express their understanding of BMLC on their campus; (b) how students make sense of their engagement experiences in BMLC; and (c) the ways participating in BMLC matters in students' college experience. Three primary themes that were revealed from the data are components of the CECE model that include: (a) developing Black men's cultural familiarity, (b) connecting to a culturally enriching environment, and (c) enhancing culturally relevant knowledge.

BMLC is an important space for young men. This initiative has helped Black males to matriculate through college, develop cultural familiarity, and connect with staff

and peers from similar backgrounds, while also validating their belongingness within the campus community. One student within the program stated, "It's almost like a frat without being one; it's like a brotherhood without having obligations" (Druery & Brooms, 2019). Students within the BMLC felt so connected to the program coordinator because of help provided to get through various struggles providing mentoring, social, and personal support. Program alumni took pride in modeling success to the current members of BMLC. Students had the opportunity to engage in cultural community service which increased cultural capital.

Black males hold negative attitudes toward reaching out for help and making themselves vulnerable when stereotypes, prejudiced behavior, as well as issues of race and racism exist within the campus culture (Duncan, 2003; Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004; Stewart, 2017). One student in BMLC stated, "I had other people who believed in me" (Druery & Brooms, 2019). For that student and others within BMLC, this initiative helped them to come into the university and feeling comfortable is essential in shaping their college experience (Druery & Brooms, 2019). Having faculty and staff available to students at the start of their academic career helps students build relationships with those within the university committed to their overall success. In addition to the support of faculty and staff, current students within BMLC had the opportunity to receive peer support. Two students shared that having this peer support helped them to not feel isolated, helped strengthen bonds as they shared similar struggles, and served as a support in their academic persistence. BMLC was a safe and culturally sustaining environment for these young men.

Experiences outside of the classroom are important for the development of Black

male students. As the men within BMLC reflected on the program's experiences, they

shared their need to grow and mature, reflected on their different journeys in life, and

how, through this program, they were able to identify their own leadership capabilities

(Druery & Brooms, 2019). Black males' college experiences differ from their White

counterparts. Providing a culturally validating environment that increases students'

engagement was described as rewarding and healing by one of the participants. Some

Black males grow up being told they are bad, stupid, will go to jail, would be nobody, or

would not amount to anything. So, when Black males have the opportunity to understand

their agency and receive support from those within the university, it helps usher a sense

of urgency and purpose in their college efforts and build self-efficacy and confidence. As

college and university administrators seek ways to support Black males, administrators

who engage Black males in culturally enriching environments, promote positive

relationships and brotherhood, and provide holistic support will see an increase in the

persistence and graduation rates of Black males (Druery & Brooms, 2019).

Stereotypes of Belongingness: Models of Understanding

The often-quoted statement, "There are more Black men in prison than in our

colleges and universities," has been used in many ways (*INSIGHT Into Diversity*

Editorial Board, 2017).

According to Elwood Robinson, PhD, the chancellor of Winston-Salem State University

stated:

For nearly a decade, this has been a popular statement with those attempting to dramatize the plight of African American males. Although today it is factually inaccurate, there are far too many of these individuals in prison and not enough in college. (*INSIGHT Into Diversity* Editorial Board, 2017)

In 2016, the total college enrollment rate was higher for Asian young adults (58%) than for young adults who were of two or more races (42%), White (42%), Latinx (39%) Black (36%), Pacific Islander (21%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (19%). From 2000 to 2016, the total college enrollment rates increased for White (from 39 to 42%) Black (from 31 to 36%), and Latinx young adults (from 22 to 39%) (NCES, 2016)... de Brey et al. (2019) presented the 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in the fall of 2010 was highest for Asian students (74%), followed by White students (64%); students of two or more races (60%), Latinx students (54%), Pacific Islander students (51%), Black students (40%) and American Indian/Alaska Native students (39%).

Early portrayals of dominance in fields other than academics unwittingly cast male minorities as subordinates within school standings (Harris & Leonardo, 2018). To better understand the interactions of factors that play into effect in the discussion of the perceptions of Black and Latinx males toward programs designed to support and foster academic involvement, performance, and achievement, this current study was anchored on the concept of sense of belongingness (see Strayhorn, 2018). Strayhorn (2018) studied differing personal perspectives of societal belongingness as determined by factors such as

race, gender, and beliefs. Strayhorn (2018) outlined sense of belongingness as a part of a grand framework that can be sought to equip stakeholders to ensure the success rate and retention in the class regardless of the level. Andrews et al. (1987) conducted by a multi-phase study and found students' perception changes and develops in varying changes from the early judgment to the reflection of choices and these phases must be altered to appropriate positive impacts. Overall, there is a disparate understanding regarding treatments on whether success on the collegiate level among male minorities is determined by race perception (dominance), level of preparedness, and individual perspectives. These three contributing factors serve as essential interplays in the output that Black and Latinx males produce in the classroom, specifically at the early stages of curriculum induction.

Challenges of Cross-Cultural Mentoring

Cross-cultural mentoring relationships at times struggle due to issues surrounding race, class, and gender (Johnson Bailey & Cervero, 2004). Mentoring is a way to support Black and Latinx students to help reform many of the challenges experienced during their time in college (Blackwell, 1989). Kochan et al. (2015) stated the collective climate of a campus is a barrier to cross-cultural mentoring. When individuals, organizations, and or campus communities are closed-minded, it does not provide the necessary environment for all students to be successful. Campus culture matters. Those who serve as a mentor to Black and Latinx and or ethnic groups historically disenfranchised must provide their program mentors with training to address social and cultural differences (Kochan et al., 2015). Research on the challenges of cross-cultural

mentoring yield important considerations for mentorship programs. For example, in a qualitative study of the Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Diversity (LEAD) peer mentoring program, a peer mentoring program established to increase retention for those in the health care field of communication science and disorders while also minimizing aspects of power (social, gender) and permanence, (Kochan et al., 2015) sought to identify the barriers, goals, and values of graduate student mentees related to culture and diversity.

Barriers to Cross-Cultural Mentoring

In the LEAD study, the structure and relationships were the barriers. Students reflected that scheduling time with their mentors, the busyness of the academic calendar, degree program, in addition to working, family, and being in different locations at times caused for some mentors to forget to check in on their mentees at times. When it came to relationship barriers, the way mentors thought about their mentees presented challenges. Mentors also perceived mentees lacked motivation. Due to the fact that communication seemed one sided, mentors felt their expectations of the relationship went unfulfilled. Some mentors desired more direct guidelines and requirements from the program, as others enjoyed the flexibility and setting up their own structure to make the mentor-mentee relationship work. In year two of the study, mentors highlighted time and location challenges. These items were recognized as possible challenges rather than barriers to the mentoring processes.

Opportunities and Value of Cross-Cultural Mentoring

Goals and values of LEAD mentors within year one were derived from a total of 387 statements from 15 mentors. Statements made by the mentors had three major themes: (a) mentor processes with a focus on self, (b) mentor processes with a focus on the mentee relationship, and (c) cultural processes relating to mentoring. In this study, mentors were apprehensive to assume that that the role they played was helpful or appreciated. Given the complexity of mentee needs, Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) encouraged students to have multiple mentors as they matriculated throughout their college years. Seven of the LEAD mentors expressed their thoughts as it related to facilitating mentee knowledge/skill (professional relationship) stating that "we're building relationships constantly" (Bellon-Harn & Weinbaum, 2017, p. 9). Tutoring groups and workshops to build various skills and provide exposure to various career opportunities were helpful to the mentees.

Cultural process was valued by the mentors in year one of this study. One takeaway that was highlighted to increase long term relationships by several mentors was awareness, as a mentor described that talks about race, mentoring, and their influence were very inspiring and eye opening in a room full of strangers. As the study moved into year two, 345 statements were analyzed from the mentors. Sixty three percent of those statements were about the mentor process, and 37 were about the cultural process. The occurrence of comments related to cultural process was greater during year two. Within year two, mentors engaged themselves more into the mentoring experience and strengthening their relationships with their mentees. One mentee recounted, "We were

able to open our mind to other opinions and even we didn't agree necessarily we accepted them and respected them" (Bellon-Harn & Weinbaum, 2017, p. 10). Identity development and increasing their cultural awareness became valuable takeaways. Cross-cultural development process for students included: (a) openness, (b) discussion and growth, and (c) empathy.

LEAD mentoring made an impact on the attrition, attitudes, climate, roles, and experience of the mentors. The experience between the mentors and mentees was valuable to concepts regarding help and knowledge of cross-cultural mentoring. In addition, mentors and mentees engaged in community, academics, career, and social activities together. Findings from this study agreed with reports from Wright-Harp and Cole (2008), Wright-Harp and Muñoz (2000), and Rentschler and Gasior (2011) that mentors benefit from the cross-cultural mentoring relationship. In order to successfully recruit and retain underrepresented student populations for diversity institutions, one must consider the following: (a) a commitment to peer-mentoring and (b) start cross-cultural mentoring with a strong structure and support system. Kochan et al. (2015) stated cultural barriers require unambiguous training on how to commence difficult conversations and recognize social cultural differences. Collaborative activities with mentors and mentees provide opportunities for both sides to have open-minded discussions, address personal biases, and deepen their understanding regarding the background of others.

Faculty Mentoring for Ethnic and Racial Minority Students (ERMS)

Having faculty who are engaged in a mentoring relationship with students is a valuable resource for Black and Latinx students (Brunsma et al., 2017; Mendoza & Samuel, 1978). The experience of the real world is brought to the classroom when there is ethnic and racial diversity, acceptance of the differences of all, and the challenge of traditions and biases, which ultimately lead to strengthening the ability for people from all walks of life to work together (Tram et al., 2020). The ability to bring together individuals from various ethnic and racial backgrounds leads to new knowledge, perspectives, and insight that contribute to inspired and applicable solutions to existing problems (Rogers & Molina, 2006). When institutions have ethnic and racial Black and Latinx faculty, students from Black and Latinx groups are more likely to be successful (Awais & Yali, 2013). The satisfaction of the student experience is impacted when the expectation of their degree programs is met (Suhre et al., 2007). Students from Black and Latinx backgrounds who have a faculty member as a mentor reported having a higher cultural fit, college satisfaction, and higher retention numbers (Proctor et al., 2018). In Tram et al.'s (2020) study, four themes emerged from faculty mentoring including: (a) career support, (b) guidance customized to the concerns of ethnic and racial Black and Latinx students, (c) a relationship that emphasizes relationship and trust, and (d) treating students from Black and Latinx backgrounds as people. Faculty that mentor students have a better understanding regarding the needs of students, how they learn, and are able to provide them with the support required to matriculate and complete their degree programs (Vasquez & Jones, 2006). A faculty-student mentoring relationship allows for

early warning signs of potential problems to be detected and mitigates the impact of distractions, discrimination, and any other stressors (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005).

Cultural diversity within the classroom plays an important role in the Black and Latinx students' academic satisfaction (Maton et al., 2011). The absence of cultural diversity within the curriculum results in Black and Latinx students becoming disengaged in lectures and discussions, resulting in poor academic performance and increased attrition (Maton et al., 2011; Rogers & Molina, 2006). Inclusive curriculum creates an environment for all students to be able to work in a welcoming and diverse ethnic racial setting (Tram et al., 2020). Black and Latinx male students, like students from all ethnicities, need successful role models that they can identify with to promote academic competence and self-esteem (Atkinson, 1997).

The importance of faculty mentoring in relation to other factors has not been analytically researched as it relates to ethnic racial Black and Latinx students. Tram et al.'s (2020) research questions were designed to examine the influence of faculty mentoring to academic program satisfaction, as it relates to the variables of financial support, incorporation of ethnic Black and Latinx issues in classes, and dominant culture academic expectations. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 62 years old ($M = 28.46$, $SD = 5.3$). In terms of ethnic and racial identity, 1.7% ($n=2$) of the sample identified as American Indian, 1.7% ($n=2$) European, 3.5% ($n=4$) Middle Eastern, 13% ($n=15$) Latinx, 16.6% ($n=19$) Black, 33.1% ($n=38$) Asian, 5.2% ($n=6$) other, and 25.2% ($n=29$) multiracial. With regard to gender, 9.6% ($n=11$) of the sample identified as nonbinary,

14% (*n*=15) as male, and 77.4% (*n*=89) as female. Regarding relationship status, 23.5% (*n*=27) were in a relationship, 20% (*n*=23) were married, and 42.6% (*n*=49) were single.

The findings of the study of satisfaction for faculty mentoring stated that faculty mentoring had the strongest relation to ERMS program satisfaction and that it had a consistent, unique, and significant positive relation even after the other factors in the study (i.e., financial support, ethnic Black and Latinx content, and academic socialization) were considered (individually and in combination). It is vital for ethnic racial Black and Latinx students to have faculty mentors who are empathetic and invested in their growth and development (Tram et al., 2020). Students reported that they preferred to have a mentor of the same ethnicity and racial background (Chan et al., 2015). The challenge is that there is not enough faculty of color for students to be assigned homogeneous mentors (Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Sverdlik et al., 2018). Those faculty members who serve as mentors should be knowledgeable and or open-minded to learn about culturally specific challenges that are experienced by Black and Latinx male students (i.e., racism, family obligations, disconnect of cultural, and professional identities), in addition, the lens which mentors see and refer to students is important as well (Tram et al., 2020). Higher education institutions that strengthen financial support and increase ethnic Black and Latinx content within their academic curriculum can facilitate academic climates that are more inclusive.

Peer Mentoring

By providing information, guidance, and encouragement, mentors can play an important role in nurturing students' college aspirations, connecting them to campus

resources, and advising them on how to make successful transitions from high school to their first year on campus (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). Peer mentoring decreases attrition (Cokley, 2000). Those students from racial and ethnic Black and Latinx groups who participate in mentoring programs are more likely to persist and complete their degree programs (Bellon-Harn-Harn & Weinbaum, 2017). Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) encouraged students to have multiple mentors including their peers as they matriculate throughout their college years. Peer mentoring is mutually beneficial to the mentors and mentees as it helps build confidence and gives perspective to academic and social experiences. Successful factors that are a part of mentoring within schools are authenticity, empathy, collaboration, and companionship (Spencer, 2006). Peer mentoring establishes a mutual ground that diminishes any power struggle between mentors and mentees (Keller & Pryce, 2010). It is important to create structure for students within peer mentoring programs. Karcher et al. (2006) recommended providing training, setting goals, safe space, and resources so mentors have confidence to assist their mentees and build meaningful relationships.

External Mentoring

Gibson (2014) recommended that educators should work to link Black and Latinx males at the undergraduate level to community mentors. Having mentors from the community such as business leaders or clergy will serve as great role models for young men. It is important to have mentors from those professions to help Black and Latinx males to be socially accepted and have the ability to speak freely about their experiences and challenges pertaining to their academic experiences and the campus culture (Gibson,

45

2014). Knights Foundation is one of many community-based organizations that has taken

strides to provide resources and programs for Black males. Programs like the Quest

Conference and Black and Latinx males in Higher Education Conference provide

seminars and workshops encouraging faculty, staff, and administrators to seek solutions

to address low graduation rates among Black and Latinx males (Gibson, 2014).

Best Practices of Intentionally Designed Mentoring

Many researchers adopted and placed into effect educational practices as they

worked to understand the inadequacies of the proposed plans. These are based on the

roles played upon by community and stakeholders' involvement. Some ideas suggest

focusing on looking at the variables that contribute to increasing the academic success

rate of students of color such as early intervention programs designed to curb the

situation at its early onset. If appropriately administered, this may be a good practice;

however, not all educators are proactive toward this condition as there can be an effect on

their teaching portfolio or the teaching process itself once problems are identified. The

Seven Centers (2014) recommended strengthening the roles of teacher developmental

efforts and crafting viable observation programs to more effectively set standards

institutions can adhere to.

Additionally, the assistance must be started as early as the freshmen year in

undergraduate school and the years after (postsecondary). Professional development

among educators was also included as part of the response. This included broader

aspects, which ranged from faculty building to goal setting, and aligning institutions

goals to the planned strategic outcomes. These varying levels of interventions tackle the

superficial face value of the problem and strive to promote holistic approach in the educational institutions. Similarly, Gardenhire and Cerna (2016) claimed that regardless of the pursuit for excellence and success in the schools, with credentials and qualifications at par with their majority counterpart, identified students of color will still encounter virtually insurmountable obstacles that hinder their progress. To begin, there has been an unfair advantage attributed to the type of school attended and the programs offered to the groups. These Black and Latinx males have had to deal with shortness of preparation into higher education. Across the United States, university administrators have developed targeted programs and support services to address the gaps in academic performance and degree attainment.

Skills Needed to Promote Retention and Persistence in Mentoring Relationships

To gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of these programs, Gardenhire and Cerna (2016) performed an evaluation of 82 programs created and implemented to address structural barriers within postsecondary institutions. Researchers have documented low levels of college preparation and academic achievement before and during college contribute to challenges faced by Black and Latinx males during their academic experience (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). In addition, these students' persistence and degree attainment is challenged by lacking finances and working full time while also having inadequate support (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). With these complex issues having a negative impact on the Black and Latinx males, the University of Texas at Austin's Project Males (Mentoring to Achieve Latinx Educational Success) and San Diego State University's Black and Latinx male Community College Collaborative

(MsC3), along with several other nationwide programs are working to discover best practices to implement college campuses to improve outcomes while providing academic and social support for men or color (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016).

The 82 programs that specifically serve Black and Latinx males at postsecondary educational institutions across the country were evaluated to better understand the types of services implemented to tackle the barriers to student success (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). Using online research, referrals, emails, and phone calls, the research team conducted their scan in two stages. During 2015, there was an initial scan of 42 scans, which formed the foundation of the study and then in 2016, these 42 programs along with 60 additional programs were contacted to get detailed information on demographics and support services offered. Gardenhire and Cerna categorized five factors that are necessary for the success of Black and Latinx males, which include: (a) academic advising and counseling, (b) academic and study skills training, (c) leadership training, (d) mentoring, and (e) special events and/ or workshops. After reviewing the MDRC scans, mentoring was shown to be the most common program. Mentoring provides Black and Latinx male students with the consistent support and guidance necessary for them to be academically successful and obtain their degrees (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). There are also different principles that systematically and structurally answer the call for equity in Black and Latinx males' higher education status (Rodríguez & Oseguera, 2015). DuBois and Rhodes (2006) emphasized the essential elements needed for mentoring programs to be successful. With competing priorities of academic deadlines and personal and social responsibilities, it is important that mentoring programs provide proper training, outline

expectations for mentors and mentees, match students by academic programs or common interest, and build a culture where students know they belong and have the confidence to interact with mentors and university staff to develop meaningful relationships. In Gardenhire and Cerna's study, it was revealed that aside from intellectual points of consideration, there also has to be a focus on the concreteness of human interactions as this perpetuates the molding of students' perceptions toward involvement and connectedness to the campus culture and student life (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016). Building of relationships among peers may be the students' one way of being exposed to a myriad of possibilities and chances. The simple interactive process of exchanging ideas lays the framework for variables of educational success to get into work meaning, performance, and success operating within these aspects. The conglomeration of these agents at work detracts possible opportunities for disruptions and lack of exposure. Hence, the development of connections happens first followed by the educational interactions. When relevant exchanges are practiced, attitudes that promote positive bonds are enhanced specifically are shared by the students, faculty, and university staff (Gardenhire & Cerna, 2016).

The role of establishing open communication within the college/ university setup cannot be underestimated as it can be fostered in a variety of ways. Open communication is a great tool to utilize inside of the academic experience. As the authors pinpoint, valuable assets can be gained from open talks, and this could be done through infiltration from the campus leadership, which then moves throughout the campus community. Having active dialogue and engagement within all aspects of the university and its

stakeholders has proven to be an effective way to foster growth and development. Not only will this pave the way towards academic achievement; this will also be an encouraging mark for representation and supportive recognition of diversity in ethnic backgrounds, which is seen as a transformational act of change. Involving the marginalized or those who identify as Black and Latinx males requires the establishment of areas intentionally reserved for this purpose. These areas are just not physical in presence; spaces refer to the avenues through which students can express themselves (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014). Harper and Williams (2014) supported this claim of using a structural approach. As indicated, healthy spaces must be set up within the higher education system to fully understand and maximize a student's potential in a working environment. Also, it will help university officials understand the function of communication in the process. Spaces designed to achieve purposeful communication are a leveraging indicator that leads to student engagement, with greater positive effects for those on the outskirts of the sector.

It is theorized that regarding students as critical thinkers might also be a factor to look into as this can be carried right into their college experience (Johnson & Wilson, 2019). As critical thinkers, students fully utilize what they have and what they know to contribute to their eventual success in the field. Since there would be in-depth development of processes, students are encouraged to expend their learning process in a more developmental method. Students are free to express their avenues in ways that critically enhance their goals and achievements. As for Black and Latinx males, perceptions tend to vary by limiting or encouraging factors. Johnson and Wilson (2019)

probed the efficacy of another exploratory approach, which aimed at gauging the role of academic advising and how the personnel, policies, and practices impact the academic experience of Black males at PWIs.

Foundations, organizations, policymakers, and politicians at the city, state, and federal level are coming together to see reforms made to increase college completion. One area that colleges and universities are paying close attention to is the quality and delivery of academic advising (Complete College America, 2013). Students' persistence and academic success requires that they learn how to navigate the college process, understand their degree requirements, and make connections to campus support services in order to complete their degree programs on time (Astin, 1993; Nutt, 2003; Swecker et al., 2013). Black males represent 5%, with Latinx males accounting for 15% of all undergraduate students (Kena et al., 2016). Both male groups have the lowest completion rates amongst all genders and sexes (Harper, 2006 a; Strayhorn, 2008). Black and Latinx males also hold negative attitudes toward reaching out for help and making themselves vulnerable when stereotypes, prejudiced behavior, as well as issues of race and racism exist within the campus culture (Duncan, 2003; Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004; Stewart, 2017). A negative culture reduces the odds that students will persist within their academic programs and take advantage of campus support services.

The cultural navigation framework is used to examine the experiences of Black male students (Strayhorn, 2015). Culture navigation highlights the fact that higher education has its own culture, privileged language, rules, and codes that are understood by those within the culture. Black and Latinx males need the support of navigators such

as faculty, staff, peer leaders, and academic advisors. As Black and Latinx males seek pathways for success, they make the adjustment to understand the dominant culture of higher education, which maybe a more competitive, individualistic, and outcome-oriented culture than the culture and environment that they grew up within. It is important that those advising students of color have cultural awareness and competence (Clark & Kalionzes, 2008; Clark & Brooms, 2018). Traditionally, two methods of academic advisement are used on college campuses. Passive advising, waiting for students to seek support, ask questions, or register for campus support has been shown to not increase students' academic confidence but places the onus on students totally. This method of advising puts first generation or those from low-income backgrounds at a disadvantage (Johnson & Wilson, 2019). Intrusive advising, which furthers the earlier notions of developmental advising (McGill, 2016), provides a more hands-on and supportive form of advisement for students. This method of advising includes paying attention to early warning signs and reaching out to students to keep them from pitfalls they will not be able to fully recover (Miller & Murray, 2005).

Johnson and Wilson's (2019) study focused exclusively on Black male student experiences with their formal faculty advisor at urban Midwestern university. Black students at this university made up 6% of the total undergraduate population, with Black males representing just 2% of the total student body. In the end, nine Black male students participated in the study. Themes that emerged during this study for Black males included (a) challenging times in academic advising, (b) impact of race and culture in academic advising, and (c) positive outcomes of formal and informal advising.

Summary

Mentorship has the influence and ability to create an effective transformation in an individual's life. Mentoring programs have proven to be historically an instrument to promote formal and informal interaction between staff and students (LaVant et al., 1997). According to Harper (2006), many universities have established mentoring programs for Black and Latinx males to transition into higher education that are supportive, encouraging, and helps retain this population. Mentorship has a positive impact on the retention of Black and Latinx males. Gardenhire and Cerna (2016) suggested that mentor to mentee relationships impact Black and Latinx males to successfully matriculate to graduation.

This current study adds to the body of literature to better understand Black and Latinx males' collegiate experiences. The review of related literature began by evaluating the challenges of Black and Latinx males in higher education, the role of mentoring, best practices of intentionally designed mentoring programs, challenges and opportunities of cross-cultural, and finally the skills needed to promote retention and persistence in mentoring relationships. As Hodge (2017) recommended, persisting through to obtain a college degree is often the outcome of programs specially designed to cater to the holistic needs of Black and Latinx populations. The rate of success proves the notion that a deliberate, well-implemented functional design supports academic achievement.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

As explained in Chapter 1, Black and Latinx males are less likely to succeed in college compared to their White counterparts. Much of the research on this population focuses on the underrepresentation, social isolation, cultural incongruence, academic hurdles, and racism that Black and Latinx male students endure on predominantly White campuses (Allen, 1992; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Feagin et al., 1996; Fleming, 1984; Fries-Britt, 1998, 2004; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001, 2002; Gossett et al., 1996; Strayhorn, 2009). The consequences of negative experiences are far reaching, impacting social mobility, self-confidence, and academic performance. Mentoring programs and student success programs with mentoring components have more recently been viewed as an opportunity to increase the persistence and retention of Black and Latinx males (Snowden & Hardy, 2012). A review of theory and related literature in Chapter 2 detail these issues and opportunities mentorship can provide, as evidenced by best practices in the field.

This study describes the experiences of Black and Latinx males who successfully completed their first year at an urban Catholic university and their perception on how a student-faculty mentor support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. The participants' experiences have been analyzed through the lens of ERI, a multidimensional, psychological construct that reflects the beliefs and attitudes that individuals have about their ethnic–racial group memberships (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). This chapter contains a description of the methodology used in this study, a brief

description of the location of the study and the participants, the instruments used in data collection, and the procedures used to interpret the data. Attention was also given to the role of the researcher in this study.

Methods and Procedures

Butina (2015) suggested that qualitative methods are appropriate when the researcher is seeking to find out what people do, think, and feel by observing, interviewing, and/ or analyzing documents. Qualitative narrative research has been used to gain insight into the experience of Black and Latinx males with a focus on answering the posed research questions. Narrative research, in particular, was selected because it provides an opportunity to explore personal experiences beyond the limitations of a questionnaire, providing insight into faculty-student mentoring, academic curriculum, social experiences, or campus culture, which can help guide how support services are developed and provided (Creswell, 2013). Czarniawska (2004) stated, "Narrative research is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (p. 17). Narrative studies provide a suitable focus on faculty-students relationships (Creswell, 2013) and can be empowering to both the storyteller and those who seek to enhance student success initiatives. This study's researcher used narrative research to gather information from the participants about their experiences from participating in a student-faculty mentoring program, best practices that helped them to maintain enrollment, the types of activities they participated in, and the transferable skills they developed and used in the classroom. The narrative research method is guided by a theoretical framework best described by use of

testimonials (Beverly, 2005).

Research Questions The researcher sought to understand how the mentoring is understood and experienced by Black and Latinx male students at a private, Catholic PWI. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What features of mentoring are identified by students as impactful to their collegiate experience?

c) How do these features inform the behavior within, approach to, and connection to the mentor within the mentoring relationship?

d) How do these behaviors and approaches influence the student perception of the value of the mentoring program?

RQ2: How do Black and Latinx males describe the role that race plays in the dynamics and value of the mentoring relationship?

Setting

The study took place at a private, Catholic institution located in the northeast region of the United States. CHEN University was founded in 1868, to provide the underprivileged families of the city with an intellectual and moral education. The university is known for its academic programs, diverse student body, and for giving students the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to serve others while achieving personal and professional success. As part of the institutional mission, the university's faculty and staff have committed to providing educational opportunities for all people, especially those affected by economic, physical, or social advantages. The university consists of three local campuses and two international campuses. This study took place on the main

campus, which is primarily a commuter campus although there are residential halls located both on and off campus that house approximately 3,600 students. The university is organized into six colleges providing degree programs in liberal arts and sciences, business, professional fields, education, pharmacy and health professions, and law.

At the time of the study, the student population was 21,635 including 16,877 undergraduates, and 4,758 graduate students. In terms of gender, 8,920 students were male and 12,715 were female. There were 7,105 undergraduate males and 9,772 females. Black males and females represented 12.5% of the student population, and Black males specifically were at 4.7%. Latinx males and females represented 12.8% of the student population, and Latinx males' enrollment percentage was 5.1% (CHEN University Fact Book, 2019). In 2019, the annual tuition expenses were approximately $43,000 depending on the program of study; 78% of the undergraduate population received financial aid.

The university's leadership team provides multiple ways for students to get involved on campus. With over 100 academic, cultural, religious, political, social justice, honor societies, and special interest student organizations, there are ample opportunities for students to be involved with campus life. Emerging leadership skills and community service are fundamental components to the educational experience, and these experiences can lead to greater personal enrichment and academic success. Leadership development complements the university's mission by providing programs, services, and mentorship opportunities that assist and enhance personal growth, decision-making, civic responsibility, and leadership advancement and training.

Top Scholars Mentoring Program

One such opportunity is the TSMP. The program is an initiative within the university's freshmen center. The TSMP's mission is to support freshman academically and socially as they transition into higher education. Freshmen students receive a faculty or staff mentor during the start of their first year. Mentors are provided with training and resources to help their students navigate through their college experience. During the training, staff stress the importance of intentional language with students. Intentional language is a thoughtful, non-judgmental, and inclusive approach that includes positive statements, countering statements, and commitment statements. Mentors engage in scenarios to help them prepare for their interactions with students. Mentors are assigned up to three mentees for the academic year, and mentors are asked to document their meetings and or phone conversations. Access to the research site for this qualitative study was obtained through the university's institutional research department following the researcher's school institutional review board (IRB) approval. Both the institutional research department and the TSMP demonstrated support for the project.

Participants

Participants within this study consist of seven Black and Latinx male students who volunteered to be a part of this study. These males are those who served as mentees within the TSMP during their first year of school. Top Scholars staff identified students from states reporting low retention rates including: California, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, and New York to participate in the mentor program. These students were sent an email application to complete by late

July prior to the start of their first semester at CHEN University. Table 1 contains information related to each participant.

Table 1

Participants' Information

Name	Student's status	Date of interview
Hubert	Graduated; pursuing grad school	September 1, 2021
Burgess	Graduated and employed	August 26, 2021
Michael	Graduated and employed	August 26, 2021
Isaiah	Graduated and employed	August 23, 2021
Lafayette	Senior year	August 20, 2021
William	Sophomore year	August 18, 2021
Jason	Graduated grad school	August 17, 2021

Data Collection Procedures

Once the study was approved from the university's IRB, the men within TSMP who identified as Black, Latinx, or being two or more races were contacted to participate in the study. Contact information was collected from the office of institutional research, who agreed to supply student information after IRB approval. Student participants were then recruited through an invitation letter describing the study (see Appendix A). Students who agreed to participate scheduled their dates and time for an interview with the researcher.

Participants were informed that this study was an opportunity to talk about their experiences at CHEN University with an unbiased third party. Participants were also provided an informed consent form assuring them that their participation in this study was strictly voluntary, they could discontinue their participation at any time without penalty, and the information was confidential. Participants signed the form electronically,

acknowledging receipt and willingness to participate. Students were assigned

pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Interviews

To gain insight into the experiences of Black and Latinx male students in the

TSMP at CHEN University, a series of narrative interview questions (see Appendix B)

were used to guide the individual interviews. Narrative interviews are often organized in

the style of a life story (Given, 2008) and open-ended narrative questions are the most

enlightening in terms of individual participants expressing information about their

experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

In order to gain insight into the participants' world, narrative interview questions

were designed, guided by ERI (see Phinney, 1992) and relevant literature on student

retention. Table 2 demonstrates the alignment of the narrative interview questions to

research questions, theory, and related literature.

Table 2

Alignment of Interview Questions, Research Questions, and Related Literature

Interview questions	Research questions	Theory	Related literature
Describe an ideal mentoring program for you.	1, 1a, 1b, and 2		Mentoring Peer mentoring External mentoring Faculty-student mentoring
Can you tell me a story that helps to describe how the role mentoring has played in your college experience?	1, 1a, and 1b	ERID	Impact of mentoring / support programs Best practices of intentionally designed mentoring Mentoring Black and Latinx males
Please describe the support and mentoring you have received from a faculty or staff	1, 1a, and 1b	ERID	Impact of mentoring / support programs Opportunities & value of

			cross-cultural mentoring
How has your experience been at CHEN University so far?	1 and 2	ERID	Promote retention & persistence in mentoring relationships Challenges facing Black and Latinx males in higher education.
Can you describe your experience in the Top Scholars mentoring program?	1, 1a, and 1b	N/A	Student preparedness opportunities & value of cross-cultural mentoring mentoring Black and Latinx males
Tell me about your mentor	1, 1a, and 1b	N/A	Opportunities & value of cross-cultural mentoring Mentoring Black and Latinx males
Please describe the program activities that have been most useful to you.	1a	N/A	Best practices of intentionally designed mentoring Mentoring Black and Latinx males Skills needed to promote retention & persistence in mentoring relationships
What it is like to be a student of color on campus?	2	N/A	Challenges facing Black and Latinx males in higher ed.

Each interview was conducted for approximately 45–-60 minutes, and all interviews were completed during a 2-week period. All interviews took place online, and were audio-recorded using WebEx, the university-approved web conferencing software. The researcher took detailed field notes during the interviews. Recorded interviews and field notes were saved to Microsoft OneDrive, a university-supported, secure, cloud-based storage system. Interviews were transcribed using Dedoose.ai, a transcription provider. Upon receipt of the electronic transcription, the researcher reviewed the transcript, and relistened to the recordings ensure accuracy in meaning, emphasis, and grammar. The researcher provided the participants with a copy of their transcript for member checking to be completed over a 2-week period. The researcher then uploaded

the cleaned transcripts and field notes into Dedoose, a cloud-based qualitative data analysis software.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher utilized field notes. Field notes allowed the research to remain in the moment of the interview with participants. Prior to the proposal, interview questions were shared with a panel of field experts and students who had an opportunity to answer the interview questions. This group provided their responses and feedback and the researcher made possible adjustments to the interview protocol. This process was critical to ensure that the questions asked were applicable to any research conducted in a mentoring program within a private and catholic university. At the conclusion of the interviewing period, study participants were emailed a copy of the transcript for member checking, and participants were allowed to make edits and or adjustments they may see fit to make.

Credibility is a vital component of a study. It is the most important factor in ensuring trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish credibility of this study, many relevant issues are identified from others' research. Implementing the correct method for the research problems is very important (Yin, 1994). The methodology used in this study was clear and explained prior to beginning the study. In addition, the review of related literature and mapping of research questions demonstrate that the methods used in this study were appropriate.

Regard dependability in quantitative research, the researcher must show that "if the work were repeated, in the same context, the same methods and with the same

participants, similar outcomes would be attained" (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). In qualitative research, showing that using the same method will gain the same outcomes can be challenging because the nature of qualitative research is setting specific. The qualitative researcher can address the dependability concern by reporting the process in detail (Shenton, 2004). This study's findings provide comprehensive information about the research design, its implementation, participant recruitment and access, and data collection process. In addition, the researcher's advisor and the committee also assisted with assessing the methodologies to guarantee the dependability of the methods used in this study.

Research Ethics

Ethical researchers consider how to best protect their participants throughout each phase of the research design (Creswell, 2015). In narrative inquiry, trust is crucial (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants and the researcher collaborate together to create a compelling description of experiences. This process involves a mutual and sincere collaboration that requires sensitivity regarding entry and exit into the site (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Narrative researchers must carefully convey necessary research modifications to participants due to the collaborative research project (Xu & Connelly, 2010). A detailed plan is designed to decrease the risk exposure of harm to a participant during this narrative research and ensure that the setting was left unscathed (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Once the research study was reviewed and approved by the IRB, participants were selected and also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time so that the data collection process involved only the participants who were willing to participate. The researcher shares an identity with the participants as a Black male leader in college student development and mentorship. These commonalities aid in creating a safe and secure environment where participants can feel that they may speak openly. Participants were encouraged to be honest and to reduce their fear of telling stories in the study. Participants were ensured that their responses were confidential, and they were assigned pseudonyms.

Data Analysis

Conducting a qualitative research study involves an unending back-and-forth between data collection and data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Coding is analysis. Saldaña (2013) defined coding as words and or short phrases that cumulatively provide information with usage of language-based or visual data. By conducting interviews, keeping a field note journal, documents obtained on participants allowed the researcher to have deep reflection on the meaning of the data.

The research process went through Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) data analysis phases. In phase one, descriptive coding provided defined codes using categorized topics based on the student's personal history, academic preparation, mentorship, and social experiences on and off campus. In phase two, emotional coding provides insight into the participants' perspectives and life conditions (Saldaña, 2013). The theoretical framework framed how students' respective cultures were considered within their academic and

social experiences in college. These insights were used to gain insight into these male students' perspectives, beliefs, and actions (see Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Within phases three and four, the testimonies of the African American and Latinx males that were part of the mentoring program were documented and developed into a summary narrative using the analyzed data to feature plot points that help organize the data. This narrative and excerpts from the collective story served to answer the researcher's questions.

Researcher's Role

The researcher is a Black male administrator who works in student affairs at the study site. As an administrator in student affairs for over a decade, the researcher has worked with countless undergraduate students and believes that mentoring programs are essential to the academic, social, and professional success of Black and Latinx students. The researcher currently holds the position of director for student development and plays a major role with the first-year student experience and overall student programming. The researcher's interests center on the successful completion of Black and Latinx males, specifically related to assisting with academic support, career preparation, spiritual development, and social integration by establishing connections with the relevant support services. The researcher believes that despite injustices and inequalities, Black and Latinx males within higher education are resilient. Too often, the narrative orated is on weaknesses rather than the strengths and success of Black and Latinx males. Black and Latinx males have no choice but to remain resilient in the face of such severe challenges. Positive engagement, shared vision, and welcoming and supportive environments that

enhance the social and academic success of these students must be established within universities.

The position of director for student development offers a unique opportunity to relate to the students and create an environment of trust where students were comfortable with offering authentic information. The researcher also shares a common experience of success, ethnicity, gender with the participants, and an understanding of the environment.

This role and belief system can also create bias in the research. In qualitative research, researchers must identify their biases and express any of the study's assumptions based on their experiences (Janesick, 2000). This critical self-reflection known as epoche refers to the suspension of judgment regarding validity (Moustakas, 1994). At the start of all interviews, the researcher provided background information to create a welcoming environment, building connectivity with the participants. Transparency with the participants is important in order to obtain valid and trustworthy information. Establishing a connection with the interviewee, allows the researcher to build confidence and trust with participants (Glesne, 1999). Researchers, who have studied a demographic, to which they fit, have an advantage because they can use the group's knowledge to better understand their experiences. This knowledge also helps in sustaining authenticity and grasping information and capability to narrate with the issues being discussed (Taylor, 2005). The researcher centered the participants' experiences relying on the stories to come forth without interference.

Summary

The present study's researcher used Black and Latinx males' narrative experiences at a private Catholic PWI to explore the role of a university mentoring program and how students describe it as related to perceived value and racial and ethnic identity development. To do so, the study used Phinney's (1992) ERID model to center the experiences of this population as they develop, matriculate, and come to understand the role of university student support. Using a narrative analysis method, the participants' stories were captured and coded to develop a collective story representative of their experiences and development. Care will be given to adhere to ethical considerations throughout the study design. Ultimately this project centered participants' voices in service to a project that informs research and practice, reaffirming the necessity of intentionally connecting Black and Latinx males to people, services, and organizations that support their development and empower them be an integral part of the campus community. University leaders must create pathways for success where Black and Latinx males can let their light shine, liberated from fear, and allowing their persistence and success to liberate others from bias, prejudices, and or misunderstanding of their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

This chapter begins with profiles of seven Black and Latinx male students who volunteered to be a part of this study; each student participated in the TSMP during their first year of school. Each profile includes the pseudonym of that participant and provides basic background information on that participant. After the profiles, the key findings are discussed by topic area. The findings were gathered from the transcripts and narrative interviews conducted by the researcher.

Hubert

Hubert is a 20-year-old Latinx male from Queens, New York. Hubert graduated in 2019 with a degree in Biology and is now pursuing graduate school. Hubert served as a peer leader and president of his student organization. Hubert was a commuter student throughout his undergraduate years. Hubert took great pride in being a Latinx male enrolled in college.

Burgess

Burgess is a 21-year-old Black male from Baltimore, Maryland. Burgess graduated with a degree in marketing in 2020. During his undergraduate experience, Burgess served as an executive member of several clubs and organizations, as well as a student ambassador. During his time in the TSMP, he gained a greater understanding on the importance of being involved on campus.

Michael

Michael a 20-year-old Latinx male from Rochester, New York. He is a first-generation college graduate who completed his program in 2019 with a degree in Risk Management. Michael served as a resident assistant and an executive board of his fraternity, and Hispanic student association.

Isaiah

Isaiah is a 22-year-old Black male from Jacksonville, Florida. He is a first-generation college student who graduated in 2020 with a degree in psychology. Isaiah's involvement on campus within the resident life program helped him to build strong relationships with his peers. Isaiah currently facilitates wellness groups to help college students who are having mental health challenges.

Lafayette

Lafayette is a 20-year-old Black male from Atlanta, Georgia. Lafayette is completed his undergraduate program in computer science and graduated in 2021. Lafayette was a member of several organizations on campus advocating for the needs for students on campus.

William

William is an 18-year-old Black male from Bronx, New York, in his sophomore year majoring in computer science. William's campus involvement includes the university pep-band. In addition to being involved in several campus organizations, William also works at a local restaurant near campus.

Jason

Jason is a 20-year-old Black male from Oakland, California. Jason is currently a graduate student in the school of business who completed his undergraduate degree in accounting Spring 2020. Jason served as a peer leader and resident assistant during his undergraduate years. The TSMP connected him to faculty and staff members who were instrumental in his success at the university.

Findings

An analysis of the transcripts revealed a common thematic timeline of the students' experiences, which included: (a) pre-enrollment experiences, defined as pertaining to the students' experiences prior to collegiate enrollment; (b) faculty/mentor commitment, defined as commitment of time and energy from faculty/mentor and mentee; (c) family and campus community support, defined as a shared responsibility and reciprocal process whereby institutions faculty, staff, administrators, and the school community engage students and actively supporting the students development and learning; and (d) student experience, defined as aspects of academic and intellectual development and social and emotional life. These themes are discussed in the sections that follow.

Racial and Financial Background Shape Experiences

Issues around inclusion and representation, both racially and economically, shaped these students' collegiate experiences from pre-enrollment to their classroom dynamics. Many of these young men grew up in inner city communities where the demographics of their schools' student population were Black and Latinx; however,

Jason and Burgess went to school with students who were primarily White and Asian prior to their collegiate enrollment. Their families were one of only a few families of color in their respective communities in California and Maryland. Jason, who decided to make what he called a "life changing decision" to move from California to New York stated, "I come from a community that had some diversity, but I wanted more diversity and inclusion. Our family was one of a few families of color within the community." He "was nervous" and surprised by the amount of diversity that he did not experience in high school, stating "seeing students of other ethnicities during my university tour and summer orientation I wondered if I would really fit in here." However, Jason concluded by saying "Being in New York at this university made me feel like my prayers were answered." Likewise, Burgess added,

> In selecting a university I wanted to be surrounded by people from many walks of life. I knew it would be an adjustment for me but it reflects the real world/ workforce and I want to be prepared when my time comes.

Burgess's friends went to historically Black colleges and universities. Instead of joining them, he felt CHEN University would provide him with a more holistic collegiate experience.

As students prepared to enter the university, there was an expectation for not just a diverse and inclusive representation amongst the student body but also within the staff, faculty, and administrators. All of the participants expressed their excitement about the diverse urban environment. Michael recalled the feeling stating, "First impression was a love for the school being diverse and in a big city." Participants shared that during high

school there were very few times that they had a teacher or administrator who looked like them and understood what it was like to walk in their shoes. Overall, their hopes were that they would have professors and other administrative support that represents them and takes time to understand them in college. Michael passionately expressed,

> I prayed that for once I could attend a school where I was educated by faculty who looked like me. Diversity and inclusion is not just something that I am expecting to have amongst my peers but also when I am learning in the classroom.

> Another key factor in making a decision on college that reoccurred was the financial cost of the university. Participants shared that their decision on what college to attend came down to the financial support that the university could provide. Hubert, who attended college as a first-generation student went on to say, "I received a scholarship from the university, but my parents were willing to help me attend the university, in spite of the financial burden we would encounter. I was determined to make my parents proud." All of the young men described this decision being a difficult one because it did not just impact them, but also their families. Michael shared,

> Financially this was a sacrifice and a struggle for my family and I so I picked the cheapest dorm room I could get. I was determined to make it work knowing the sacrifices that my family and I were making in order for me to go to school. I was blessed to receive $17,000 in scholarship money, which was more than anyone else at my high school. Still forced to take out loans and pay money out a pocket to attend school it created various financial burdens for my family and I.

Financial issues persisted during their education. Michael explained "There were times during my freshmen year that my mom would tell me she couldn't afford the payments and I may have to come back home and attend community college." Michael would use this challenge to motivate himself stating, "I was determined to graduate from CHEN University's and also do whatever I could to make sure I helped my mom financially." Becoming an resident assistant was rewarding and a pivotal moment in Michael college career. Being able to eliminate a $15,000 bill for his mom he described it as a "blessing."

Jason who also had financial challenges during his freshmen year shared, "I later understood why some freshmen transfer out at the end of their first semester or first year in college." Hubert also shared that, "Students of color don't have it easy. I know so many who had to end up transferring out at some point in their academic experience because of financial, personal and or social challenges."

Many of the participants shared examples of vulnerability and isolation that left them feeling excluded in the classroom. William shared a particularly poignant story about an experience where he tried to explain to his professor that he was not grasping the material for the class. William experienced difficulty because the books for the course were e-books, and he was accustomed to having a hard copy to read from. In addition, his family did not have the Internet at home. William remained on campus, using the campus Internet connection and computer labs to get his work done. William went on to describe his experiences of his first year and beyond by sharing, "When I mentioned this to several of my professors throughout the years, they just brushed off what I was saying. They did

73

not realize that had to spend longer hours getting things done because of my personal situation."

Likewise, Michael shared a story about what he felt was a troubling experience with a faculty member. He stated,

There was a classroom experience I will never forget, as my professor asked me to guess how much his house cost. Me, being from a low-income community, I replied "$250,000." My professor replied, "Do you think I live in a shed?" I was not trying to be offensive. I answered it with a random number because I had no idea what houses cost or how real estate works. Some of my classmates, clearly who were more wealthy than I began to laugh along with the Professor at my reply.

Michael reflected on that moment and stated,

It was at that moment I realized that my life experiences were a lot different from my peers. They grew up in houses and I grew up in a basement apartment with my grandma sleeping on the couch, my mom and I sharing a bed until I was 13 or 14.

Examples of these disconnects go beyond finances to include race. Participants indicated that at times it could be difficult to share experiences in affirming or supportive ways. William articulated this when sharing his experiences. Upon reflection, he stated, "Throughout college, majority of my teachers were White, and so there was a disconnect at times when it came to them understanding my life experiences. As a result, the conversations were very surface."

Faculty/Mentor Commitment

In describing their experiences in the program, some students described the personal connection mentors were able to establish as critical to the success of the relationship. There were also those students whose mentors were unavailable ended up feeling disconnected and did not benefit in the same ways. Lafayette recalled the experience succinctly stating, "I felt isolated." During the mentoring experience, an opening meeting with his mentor, there was a lack of engagement. "After the first meeting I attempted to set up meetings, and he was never available." Lafayette went on to explain the actions that made him feel this way. His mentor would constantly reschedule meetings and take days to respond to his emails. Similarly, Michael said, "I did not receive any real support from my mentor." Michael defined his mentor-mentee relationship as "disconnected." His mentor was not available most of the time when he needed to meet, and when he was available, he rushed through meetings. Michael recalled the experience, and explained that on several occasions his mentor would be rushed; he shared,

> I would go to his office for a scheduled meeting, and he would say things like 'hey come on in, I was headed out but I have a few moments to speak. This made me feel like things were rushed and he did not care or value the time slots that he scheduled me for.

This led to a shock for one student who, once on campus was paired with a White female mentor. William explained, "Having a mentor also who was white was a shock to me. I thought the mentor I would receive would have been a staff member of color." As

75

the semester went on, he realized that the lack of mentors of color was due to the hiring of overall university staff. "One thing I did notice overtime was that there was not a large number of administrators or faculty of color at our university," William explained. He then further clarified,

> I do not have an issue with people from other ethnicities but I guess my expectation in coming to college was I would finally be able to connect to adults of color to mentor me and guide me along the way.

> Some of the participants expressed that they were asked to be a part of focus

groups or meet with other stakeholders at the university for other events. Burgess explained, "Students of color were not represented in a fair and equitable manner. The board of trustees, faculty and staff of color are very limited."

Jason felt really good about joining this program and recalled his first conversation with his mentor by sharing,

> Top Scholars Mentoring program was a great help to me. Prior to the start of the semester, I received a call from my mentor. She was a female who was so willing to help me anyway I needed assistance. We would meet for lunch at times in her office or in the student cafeteria and discuss how I was doing academically, what I was involved in, how it was going and she would tell me about other things I needed to get myself involved in.

> Hubert shared, "My mentor was a faculty member who was eager to help me and

her other mentees. You could sense from the first call that she made, that she was genuine and wanted to see me succeed." Hubert shared that his mentor would ask about his well-

being and wanted a better understanding of who he was as a person and not just as a

student.

Burgess expressed,

> My mentor interactions with me gave me the confidence to go on and be a mentor
>
> in other programs on campus. Her interactions and leadership style were one that I
>
> would take on a model for the mentees I would have during my undergraduate
>
> years. She allowed me to feel comfortable in our conversations that we had. My
>
> mentor was adaptable and opens to the topics that I raised during our meetings.

Burgess went on to share how his mentor gave him leadership assessment test to take, for

him to have a better understanding of his leadership styles and what work environment

would be the best fit for him in the future.

Jason further expressed how in the past that he had mentors that did not always

have answers to his questions and would make things up instead of admitting they did not

know. Jason shared, "My mentor stuck to her strengths and shared as much information

about what she knew that could help me." There was a great appreciation for mentors and

faculty members who went the extra mile to help students. Faculty members and all other

university stakeholders must understand that what they do and say to men of color

matters significantly. Faculty and staff must be engaged through professional

development workshops.

Connectivity

Mentors' ability to connect students with other campus resources was another

theme that emerged. Burgess expressed,

My mentor and the activities within the Top Scholars Mentoring program

helped me out a lot. The collaborations Top Scholars Mentoring program

had with other student services departments on campus. I was able to learn

more about different programs on campus and get involved in them.

Career services workshops, campus activities and even the service

opportunities have played a huge role in my development.

Jason stated, "My mentor connected me to other students." Jason expressed how his

mentor would invite him to meetings she would attend with other student groups where

she served as the on-campus advisor. In addition, Jason received invites to networking

events for business students. These opportunities opened his eyes to see that access and

exposure matter. Jason elaborated and said,

I took advantage of each and every opportunity that was presented to me.

Attending career fairs held by top accountant firms was amazing. I soon

noticed I had access to events that many of my peers did not have access

to because I built solid relationships.

Seeking Community Beyond the Program

During the study, several of the participants (i.e., Lafayette, William, Isaiah and

Michael) expressed that in high school they were used to there being a calendar of events

and consistent programs they attended after school or on a certain date at a specific time.

As participants reflected on their time within the TSMP, they shared there was a lack of

programming and meetings. Lafayette explained,

Outside of the first initial program we did not meet at all and I was just told to

meet with my mentor. It left me unsure about the purpose of the program so I got

involved in other programs on campus to make sure I was doing all I could as a

freshman to have a rewarding college experience.

William attended the university based on information some of his friends shared.

Each student recalled needing an outlet and space for support. Eager to be

connected to programs on campus that contributed to the academic and social experience

of students, William and Lafayette remained determined to make connections to other

resources on campus. These two men attended events such as the campus activities' fair,

followed organizations on social media, attended tabling events on campus, and even

made sure they set up appointments with career services to ensure they were connected to

all campus resources they needed. At the campus activities' fair, William and Lafayette

joined peer organizations that gave them the opportunity they desired to connect with

other students of color. Lafayette shared,

There was another mentoring program on campus with students of color that

helped me to feel connect to not just my peers but also the administrators. They

were engaged, had check in meetings with us to see how we were progressing

academically and socially.

"My involvement in campus activities, service projects and my academic courses

provided me with a balanced student experience," Jason replied when asked to describe

his overall experience at the university and within the TSMP. After having great

orientation leaders, Jason became one also and shared, "The orientation program is a

family." Starting in June and culminating in August orientation leaders facilitate sessions for students to make sure that they are well prepared for the start of the Fall semester and their academic careers at CHEN University. Incoming students learn how to find their way around campus and have a chance to meet fellow incoming students and current student leaders. This is also an opportunity to establish relationships with academic advisors, and many university departments. "Jason stated, "Outside of doing our tasks, we also traveled abroad together."

Michael joined a fraternity during the second half of his freshmen year and expressed, "The mentoring I do remember receiving came from the associate director of fraternity and sorority life. He was one of the first positive role models for me on campus." Michael expressed great joy and enthusiasm about how student engagement can be life changing for students "my junior year and senior year was amazing. I was more involved in my fraternity on campus and many other programs. I wanted to make sure I left a legacy here. I did not want a boring college experience. So, I got involved as much as I could." Michael was a part of a Latinx fraternity that was committed to take a leadership role in meeting the needs of the Latino community through academic achievement, cultural awareness, community service and promotion of Latinx culture and people. Michael felt being a part of this organization with the brothers that he has come across so far has allowed him to best student and man that he can be.

When he could not make a connection with the TSMP, William expressed how other programs within student development impacted his freshmen year by stating, "Their program was more intentional and provided me with more information and opportunities

to get involved. Being connected to Black and Latinx students determined to succeed motivated me." "There were check-in meetings about our mental health and encouraging emails sent out, academic check in meetings to make sure that we were on target academically and programs from other areas on campus to give us important information," William added. The cultural programs Michael was a part of had peer-peer roundtable discussions on topics that impact Black and Latinx communities. For example, they provided guest speaker series with Black and Latinx industry leaders to speak with them about career success and provided experiences like shadow days at their companies.

Legacy Building

Making a mark and leaving a legacy within a program and or institution is important to students such as Jason who shared,

> I was proud to be a man of color in the Top Scholars mentoring program. I took it on as a great responsibility and wanted to do my best while apart of the Top Scholars mentoring program. Being put in positions as a mentee in the Top Scholars program I understood that I was not just representing myself but others who may have been on the campus currently and or students who will come after me. I also knew I would have the opportunity because of this to help others along the way.

Jason went on to become an ambassador for the program to students of color who came behind him. Burgess reframed differences he experienced as a source of strength and concluded, "People will have different life experiences. I am grateful for experiences

81

as it made me a better man." Lafayette said, "Who do you go to? Black and Latinx students lean on those few administrators of color for the necessary support and assistance that we need." Michael summarized his freshmen year experience by proudly describing his success and perseverance and mused, "You have to take control of your academic experience. You must be self-driven to succeed and have grit to keep from quitting."

The participants discussed their individual experiences and outlined the narrative of how they were successful in completing their freshmen year in the student-faculty mentoring program. Participants valued the ability to meet and be surrounded by other students of color coming into college became important to them. Student clubs, organizations, and programs offered to students helped students become a successful students and leaders. Hubert stated, "Being able to network and build relationships with all students but especially those students and organizations of color contributed to my personal and professional success." Michael said, "The relationships I built with admin helped me to show other students how be successful and was the reason why I landed a GA position and ultimately resulting in me graduate with my master's degree."

Research Questions

RQ1: What features of mentoring are identified by students as impactful to their collegiate experience?

The participants discussed on how they had a positive experience when their mentor was accessible and communicated frequently with them. They expressed how they received correspondence prior to the start of the semester and received a call from

their mentor. When mentors made themselves available for in-office meetings and/ or meetings over lunch, participants felt that they were able to connect with their mentor the best. The calls were nice, but the men within this study thrived when they could meet with their mentor face to face. Having a positive and supportive relationship with their mentor, faculty and or staff members within the university was meaningful to these men. Some participants went on to share that when their mentor did not communicate and/ or was not accessible, it made them disengaged and find other outlets for support on campus. Participants explained that relationships mattered to them and stated that when someone showed they cared about them, they felt more connected to the university.

The peers of these participants also played an important role in their success. Participants shared that their peers who were involved in the mentoring program, clubs, and/ or organizations on campus had a positive impact on them. They shared how their peers motivated them to be successful and being surrounded by other students of their same ethnicities or even other ethnicities challenged them to always give their best effort. The connections and relationships that they built during their freshmen year would remain with them beyond graduation.

Participants within the study shared how they valued the mutual respect and trust of their mentors. Participants shared how they appreciated not being spoken to and/ or being treated less than because of the TSMP identified them, coming from areas with low retention rates. Participants who had positive relationships with mentors within the TSMP, other university staff, and/ or peers felt they were uplifted and affirmed in those relationships. One of the participants in the student Jason went on to say that his mentor

gave him confidence to go on and be a mentor in other programs on campus. Participants explained how their mentors used a variety of ways such as collaborative learning, applying real world practices, and positioned themselves as servant leaders in the relationship. The modeled behavior and leadership styles of their mentors contributed to how they would mentor their students they were assigned in other campus programs.

Some interactions with mentors and peers taught participants valuable life lessons. Participants shared how self-reflection and advocacy was something each student should not shy away from. In their moments of reflection, they realized that their life experiences were a lot different from their peers. Some these realizations would draw them closer to programs that consisted of students and/ or staff from their same racial and ethnic identity. When feeling let down and/ or disappointed by the mentoring relationship, participants would credit their grit and self-discipline as their source of motivation that helped them succeed.

RQ2: How do Black and Latinx males describe the role that race plays in the dynamics and value of the mentoring relationship?

The participants shared how the diverse campus community contributed to their collegiate success. They realized that having the ability to be surrounded by other students of color and students from other ethnicities positively impacted their overall experience. The participants took advantage of the opportunity to engage in conversations with diverse groups and recognized the significant impact these experiences had on their academic and social collegiate careers. Participants believed that the diverse environment provided them with the opportunity to discover where they fit in on campus. Jason

84

expressed that he was proud to be a man of color in the TSMP. He felt it was a great responsibility, wanted to do his best while a part of the TSMP, and pave the way for students coming after him.

In spite of great moments shared, some participants shared that there were times they felt isolated, disconnected, and lacked support from mentors within the program. Participants expressed that they desired to have mentors of the same ethnicity. Lafayette articulated they he was shocked that he was assigned a White mentor. Over time, participants recognized that there are few staff or faculty of color at the university. Although that was not the case for all there were positive mentor-mentee engagement. The participants' challenge with their mentors occurred when mentors seemed to be too busy, lacked communication, or disinterested in the holistic development and student experience. When students did not get the support from their program mentor, they sought out other administrators, organizations, and peers who provided them with the support and encouragement they were expecting from their mentor.

Summary

Men of color within universities face distinctive challenges. Just because these men are enrolled in college, does not mean that they do not have obligations and stressful life events they encounter during their collegiate experiences. Attending a university that affirms and supports these students allows them to obtain the necessary academic experience that empowers men of color. Validation from mentors, faculty, and administrators lays the foundation for greater levels of engagement.

The narratives shared by the participants present the stories of seven Black and Latinx men. The participants provided insight on their concerns and feelings prior to enrolling in college. Each described experiences in the mentoring program, whether positive or negative. The students identified their needs and challenges, while also describing the supports that aided in their success.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings from the dissertation study in more detail and provides insight in relation to the mentoring program practices. The findings create an opportunity to provide suggestions to the staff of the TSMP and other university officials regarding the successful enrollment, retention, and persistence of Black and Latinx males in completing their freshmen year within the TSMP and graduating from the university. Within the findings, recommendations for policy and practice are offered for staff, and university officials, on what features of mentoring are identified by students as impactful to their collegiate experience. The chapter also includes the limitations of this study, which may have affected the results. The discussion of the limitations is followed by recommendations for future research, which are based on further understanding the experiences of how Black and Latinx males in completing their freshmen year within the TSMP persist towards graduation.

Implications of Findings

The objective of the study was to gain insight into the experiences of Black and Latinx males who successfully completed their first year at an urban catholic university and their perception on how a student-faculty mentor support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. The participants' experiences were analyzed through the lens of ERID, a multidimensional, psychological construct that reflects the beliefs and attitudes that individuals have about their ethnic-racial group memberships. The stories shared by the students describe experiences that provide an understanding for

what college and university administrators should do to positively impact Black and Latinx male graduation rates. Through interviews, the participants offered insight into their experiences participating in a student-faculty mentoring program, best practices that helped them to maintain enrollment, the types of activities they participated in, and the transferable skills they developed and used in the classroom.

ERID theory supports that all students belonging to Black and Latinx groups experience conflict because of their membership in a Black and Latinx group. ERID is correlated with self-esteem and belongingness for non-White, adolescent and young adult students, regardless of how the students identify (Phinney, 1992). Student support programs use this model to help develop safe places and other educational opportunities that provide guidance for Black and Latinx students. Exploring how Black and Latinx male students make meaning of the intersection of their own identity development and their perceptions of the supports available in a mentoring program refines a collective understanding of how support programs must respond to the needs to students navigating various stages of ERID.

While this study's researcher did not address gaps within the theory, it does align with the experiences described in ERID. As the literature states, the support must be started as early as the freshman year in undergraduate school and the years after (postsecondary). In this study, participants desired support upon arriving to campus. For example, Lafayette and William, who were initially nervous about the start of college, thrived and displayed a strong sense of self-esteem and a greater sense of belonging once they received the support they sought. Other administrators and student organizations of

color fulfilled the lack of engagement these students experienced from their program mentor. Having these campus connections boosted their moral and gave them the self-esteem to succeed. Faculty and staff must seek to actively engage with Black and Latinx male students and educate them on the importance and benefits of mentoring. The students in the study described the impacts of feeling connected and heard by a mentor. Each of the participants who had a positive experience with their program mentors were able to identify commonalities and a sense of mutual respect. Participants with negative experiences described the displeasure of being considered an afterthought, receiving dismissive language, and lacking connection with mentor.

The study participants shared there was a lack of Black and Latinx faculty on campus. Hiring Black and Latinx faculty members at PWIs is vital. If the retention of Black and Latinx males is important to an institution's administrators, the recruitment of Black and Latinx faculty should be as important as well. Black and Latinx males need examples of successful people who look like them so they can aspire to be successful. In addition to hiring faculty and staff of color, university administrators must make sure that all mentors receive cross-cultural training to strengthen cross-cultural relationships. It is important that all individuals mentoring students of color have cultural awareness and competence (Clark & Brooms, 2018). In several cases, participants stated that mentors of another ethnicity did not understand them and did not take the time to get to know them, which left them feeling isolated. Participants recommended professional development among educators who serve as program mentors. This professional development should include broader aspects, which range from faculty and staff diversity, equity and

inclusion training, goal setting, and aligning institutions goals to the planned strategic outcomes. Having varying levels of interventions become a part of tackling the superficial face value of the problem and strives to promote a holistic approach within educational institutions.

Ethnic and Racial Identity of Black and Latinx Males

Choosing where to attend college was a decision that brought on various emotions. For all of the participants, enrolling into a university was described as an exciting but also a nervous process for participants. Jason described his nervousness and was surprised by the amount of diversity he did not experience in high school. He stated, "Seeing students of other ethnicities during my university tour and summer orientation I wondered if I would really fit in here." Inclusion and representation related to race were considerations when selecting a college. Many of these young men grew up in inner city communities where the demographics of their school's student population were primarily Black and Latinx. The initial nervousness for all went way and because of the supporting relationships they were engaged in described their university as a home. The participants expressed how they were determined to take the initiative and serve as mentors to students in other programs on campus to ensure that other students did not experience the same challenges.

Stage 2, ethnic identity search, also referred to as moratorium, is defined by a conflict or impactful event that causes an individual to become more aware of their own ethnicity. This is often a shocking experience that changes an individual's worldview.

Within this study, Michael shared an awakening experience he encountered with one of his professors. He stated,

There was a classroom experience I will never forget, as my professor asked me to guess how much his house cost. Me, being from a low-income community, I replied "$250,000." My professor replied, "Do you think I live in a shed? I was not trying to be offensive. I answered it with a random number because I had no idea what houses cost or how real-estate works. Some of my classmates, clearly who were more wealthy than I began to laugh along with the professor at my reply.

Michael reflected on that moment and stated,

It was at that moment I realized that my life experiences were a lot different from my peers. They grew up in houses and I grew up in a basement apartment with my grandma sleeping on the couch, my mom and I sharing a bed until I was 13 or 14.

Michael was determined to not let this situation negatively affect him but instead do all he could to educate his peers on the lived experiences he has had in life. In his role as a campus leader, he hosted programs that other students would be able to the same.

Stage 3, ethnic identity achievement, is a stage where an individual emerges from a search for identity with a positive identity development. This is marked by recognition of one's own ethnicity and an awareness and appreciation of the identities of others. In this stage, individuals recognize and accept the differences between their culture, the

majority's culture, and other cultures as well. In William's interview, he expressed how other programs within student development impacted his freshmen year by stating,

> Their program was more intentional and provided me with more information and opportunities to get involved. Being connected to Black and Latinx students determined to succeed motivated me. There were check-in meetings about our mental health and encouraging emails sent out, academic check in meetings to make sure that we were on target academically and programs from other areas on campus to give us important information.

Relationship to Prior Research

As in this study, Druery (2018) established the possible underlying factors to consider when addressing issues affecting the academic experience of minorities including societal, academic, and cultural problems that are rarely experienced by other college students. The participants in this study described challenges that have been noted in previous studies, namely underrepresentation (see Palmer et al., 2014; Strayhorn, 2010); isolation (see Cuyjet, 2006; Harper & Williams, 2013); stereotype threat, and racism (see Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Smith et al., 2011). The students in this study described the challenges they made to succeed in college. The young men's stories illustrated findings from previous research, such as Brooms et al.'s (2015). Each student could articulate the value of mentorship, whether through a part of the TSMP or through alternative means. Druery's (2018) study revealed the need for supportive opportunities, ranging from academic possibilities to the potential for self-improvement. Students who found value in their mentoring relationships, or who were able to connect with others

who could provide peer or mentor support described how these connections provided opportunities that enhanced the college experience. For example, the relationship Michael was able to build with administrators gave him the confidence to go on and show other students how be successful. Michael also credits his relationships with those administrators as the reason why he landed a Graduate Assistant position and ultimately resulting in him graduating with his master's degree. Utilizing the framework of belongingness, Druery concluded that education presented to Black and Latinx males exhibits a higher rate of success provided that these students are made aware of their place in the society. Likewise, the students in this study were able to experience pride and success in part due to opportunities that helped each young man feel connected to the campus community.

Growth Mindset

Libassi (2018) discussed that it is important for men of color to have a growth mindset in order to obtain a degree. Jason shared how despite his pre-college experiences, he was determined to travel across the country for his collegiate experience to learn and grow personally and professionally. The recommendation was made for institutions to ensure students are on track within their degree fields was a highlight of the interviews with several participants. Students expressed the need for academic support that would challenge them to meet or exceed their intended goals. William stated, "In order for students to stay on track academically, advisors must be able to give us necessary advice on our degree programs." Lafayette explained,

93

Having a mentor who understood my degree program and what was required of me was extremely helpful. Some of my peers would tell me that when they were given the correct information about their degree programs and supported by their advisor it boosted their confidence.

Grit and Resilience

Schelbe et al. (2019) explained that for first generation students, grit and resilience must also be highlighted as they enter college campuses overcoming substantial obstacles. Harris et al. (2017) explored the educational system's possible systematic and structural challenges. In addition to low completion rates, Black and Latinx male students faced barriers during their educational experience that included marginalization and alienation (Harris et al., 2017). In this study, William and Lafayette remained determined to make connections to other resources on campus after having unfavorable mentoring experiences. These two men attended events such as the campus activities' fair, followed organizations on social media, attended tabling events on campus, and even made sure they set up appointments with career services to ensure they were connected to all campus resources they needed. William and Lafayette's persistence lead them to becoming members of peer lead organizations that gave them the opportunity they desired to connect with other students of color. Lafayette articulated his reasoning for seeking these opportunities by stating, "There was another mentoring program on campus with students of color that helped me to feel connect to not just my peers but also the administrators."

Druery (2018) established the possible underlying factors to consider when addressing issues affecting the academic experience of minorities. Black and Latinx males encounter societal, academic, and cultural problems that are rarely experienced by other college students that impend their success (Brooks et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2008); these challenges include underrepresentation (Palmer et al., 2014; Strayhorn, 2010) and isolation (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper & Williams, 2013). These challenges manage to impede the enrollment, academic achievement, persistence, engagement, and college completion of Black and Latinx male students (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms, 2016; Cuyjet, 2006; Harper & Williams, 2013). This study's findings align with the related literature. Students described similar impediments, isolation, and a lack of engagement. Students internalize behavior in mentoring relationships including availability, connection, enthusiasm, and engagement.

Mentoring

Cross-cultural mentoring relationships at times struggle due to issues surrounding race, class, and gender. Mentoring is a way to support Black and Latinx students to help reform many of the challenges experienced during their time in college. Kochan et al. (2015) stated the collective climate of a campus is a barrier to cross-cultural mentoring. When individuals, organizations, and or campus communities are closed-minded, it does not provide the necessary environment for all students to be successful. Campus culture matters. Those who serve as a mentor to Black, Latinx, and or ethnic groups historically disenfranchised must provide their program mentors with training to address social and cultural differences (Kochan et al., 2015).

William explained the shock and discomfort he felt being assigned a mentor who did not share his racial identity. As the semester went on William realized that the lack of mentors of color was due to the hiring of overall university staff. "One thing I did notice overtime was that there was not a large number of administrators or faculty of color at our university," William explained. He further clarified, "I do not have an issue with people from other ethnicities, but I guess my expectation in coming to college was I would finally be able to connect to adults of color to mentor me and guide me along the way."

Best Practices of Intentionally Designed Mentoring

Participants expressed that TSMP had an impact on them. Jason felt really good about joining this program and recalled his first conversation with his mentor by sharing, "Top Scholars Mentoring program was a great help to me. Prior to the start of the semester, I received a call from my mentor. She was a female who was so willing to help me anyway I needed assistance." The participants concluded that TSMP was an outlet to learn more about the university and provided them with wisdom needed to succeed during their freshmen year. Hubert shared, "My mentor was a faculty member who was eager to help me and her other mentees. You could sense from the first call that she made, that she was genuine and wanted to see me succeed."

Gardenhire and Cerna (2016) categorized five factors that are necessary to the success of Black and Latinx males. They are:

A. Academic advising and counseling include help from professional advisers and counselors to create course-specific, sequenced pathways for earning a degree or

certificate, navigating academic and social hurdles, and accessing available campus resources to support student success.

B. Academic and study skills training primarily includes tutoring and study halls.

C. Leadership training encompasses opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership in planning events and activities, community service, and managing or coordinating group meetings.

D. Mentoring includes both peer-to-peer and adult-to-peer mentoring relationships that foster a sense of inclusion, support students, and provide them with advice or guidance on how to resolve academic or personal issues.

E. Special events or workshops encompass guest speakers, special presentations, conferences, and meetings on topics related to identity and student success. (p. 3)

Participants within the study shared how the academic assistance that they received from their mentor and or academic advisor played an important role in their collegiate experience. Jason and Hubert's relationships with their mentors were described as empowering. These gentlemen felt their mentors took time with them to make sure there was a clear understanding of their degree programs, courses required to take, and how to even take elective courses that connected to their career goals and life interest. Isaiah and Michael described that their mentors helped them understand the importance of making time for studying and not being embarrassed about getting tutoring for classes they needed academic assistance with. Isaiah stated "I never had a need for tutoring in high school. I was able to grasp my work, but I understand now that being in college

requires more attention to my studies." The student support services that universities provide for students play an important role in a student's success.

Isaiah added,

> Writing center was a great help to me. I love writing and they showed me how to become even a greater writer and structure my ideas. My mentor continued to expose me to campus resources like the library and career center. Career services would also visit our classes and help us to understand the importance of focusing on our passions in life. I now see so many people who work jobs who have no passion. I am glad I have been able to focus on my career and passion in life.

Burgess was unsure about being a part of leadership programs on campus, but as a result of the experience he had with his mentor, he said, "My mentor interactions with me gave me the confidence to go on and be a mentor in other programs on campus." Burgess went on to share how his mentor gave him leadership assessment test to take for him to have a better understanding of his leadership styles and what work environment would be the best fit for him in the future.

"There is a great appreciation for mentors and faculty members who go the extra mile," Jason stated. Participants shared how they appreciated their mentor relationship more when their mentor provided guidance and wisdom pertaining to their academic, professional, and social experiences. If students did not experience a healthy mentoring experience within TSMP, students like William and Lafayette sought out the support of administrators and organizations that reflected their racial identity and or career experience.

The access and exposure that a university provides to students to attend special events and workshops that contribute to their personal and or professional success is vital. Burgess expressed,

> The collaborations Top Scholars Mentoring program had with other student services departments on campus. I was able to learn more about different programs on campus and get involved. Career services workshops; campus activities and even the service opportunities have played a huge role in my development.

> With an immense amount of student organizations, service opportunities and other campus programs students are given a holistic student experience.

Limitations of the Study

This dissertation study's researcher explored the experiences of freshmen men of color to understand their perceptions on how a student-faculty mentor support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. No study is without limitations. There are several notable limitations that should be considered with the results of this study.

The first limitation was the number of participants. Despite significant effort, the participation rate was lower than expected for the study. During the outreach process, there was a list of 35 names provided to the researcher. From the 35 names only seven responded to the calls and/ or emails. Several of the numbers and emails were inactive, which also impacted participation. Men of color were also disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and remote learning.

The results of this study are not generalizable and reflect a small microcosm of the institutional environment. The second limitation of the dissertation was not having information on those men of color that did not have mentors during their freshmen year and understanding their engagement and academic achievement. The third limitation for this narrative research study was that all of the study participants attended one institution within a diverse urban environment and may not be generalizable to other institutional types.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Faculty/Student Mentoring

When it comes to the engagement and academic success of men of color, participants benefitted from having accessible mentorship immediately. When this was not available, they felt disconnected. University leaders should provide mentors early in collegiate experiences to ensure students of color are connected to the university early on. The interviews suggest that this will curate a sense of belonging and create success. Connecting Black and Latinx males to dedicated faculty and staff for continued support is crucial to their persistent and engagement in PWIs.

Hiring and Training for Faculty and Staff

The Black and Latinx men in this study expressed the need to seek out organizations where they are more likely to be paired with a peer or faculty mentor with shared experiences. While the TSMP offered immediate connection, not all students felt a deep connection with their mentor, and many sought outside experiences. It is important that those advising students of color have cultural awareness and competence (Clark &

Kalionzes, 2008; Clark & Brooms, 2018). Mentees stated that they felt their mentor of another ethnicity did not understand them and did not take the time to get to know them, which left them feeling isolated.

Institutions' leaders must work to have representation of Black and Latinx faculty and staff to attract and provide mentoring opportunities for Black and Latinx students. Hiring men and women of color would result in an increase in enrollment and retention of Black and Latinx students. Additionally, professional development for mentors and university personnel to increase their cultural awareness would be valuable, including topics from faculty and staff diversity and equity and inclusion training to goal setting and aligning institutions goals to the planned strategic outcomes.

Additional Programming and Networks of Support

Faculty-student mentoring programs should also include intentional programming. Students explicitly noted that the TSMP did not provide set programming and that led to a reliance on the mentor connection for success in the program. Programs should consider timing training, professional development, and marketing initiatives so students seeking these opportunities can be immediately connected and stay connected throughout the school year.

Students also discussed the power of a formal or informal network on campus that includes peers, instructors, advisors, and/or mentors. Black and Latinx male participants in the study expressed feeling isolated. Establishing a network of support on campus for men of color where students can be connected to campus activities, career services, academic affairs, and student support services is important. Having networks of support

for students on campus would provide them with all of the necessary information and programs to ensure they are academically, socially, and professionally successful.

Recommendations for Future Research

More research is necessary to understand the impact of representation on males within a mentoring relationship. This study's findings suggest that a student's choice in who serves them as mentors may prove to be valuable to engagement and exploration. This study's findings present evidence to support the assertion that men of color would be more engaged, but there are barriers that prohibit them from doing so. Faculty and administrators serving in support programs can play an important role in stimulating an environment to support meaningful engagement of men of color.

Future research should be conducted on a larger group of all first-year male students, inclusive of all races who participate in faculty student mentorship programs in their first year of college. This would allow the researcher to have an expanded understanding of the student experience, as the researcher should measure the mentoring experiences non-students of color have within the mentoring program compared to the experiences of Black and Latinx students. There should be socio-cultural course content presented that brings awareness to the life opportunities and challenges faced by men of color. A replication of the present study for a study centering the academic achievement and engagement of Black and Latinx women students would add to understanding the experience from gendered perspectives.

Lastly, first year mentoring programs follow a wide variety of models, additional research on the intended outcomes of faculty/ student-mentoring relationships should be

further defined in the research. Within the United States, the academic, financial, and social race gap remains. There needs to be strong infrastructure within all academic institutions that supports men of color. Men of color within universities face distinctive challenges. Institutional stakeholders must play a crucial role in the development all students.

Conclusion

By providing information, support, and encouragement, mentors can play an important role in nurturing students' college aspirations, connecting them to campus resources, and advising them on how to make successful transitions from high school to their first year on campus. Understanding ethnic identity is important for men of color for the following reasons: (a) to serve as a buffering mechanism from attacks on ethnic identity (Romero et al., 2013), (b) to make informed ethnic identity decisions and to make connections to their ethnic groups, and (c) to know how their ethnic groups have contributed significantly to the very societies that devalue them (Whittaker, 2018).

Overall, the researcher addressed the importance of mentoring, whether it is formal or informal, the need to support men of color, in particular, those in faculty-student first year mentoring programs. The research on mentoring continues to grow in this area and its contribution to society has been on-going for decades. Intentional mentoring relationships and structured programming combined make for a program that will empower faculty and men of color within educational institutions. Selecting faculty and staff that reflect the participant's backgrounds and are fully engaged in the mentoring process is one way to enhance a successful mentoring program, for both, the mentor and

mentee. When the mentee and mentor are genuine in developing meaningful

relationships, the efforts to support the student is impactful. Through these mutual

relationships, the mentoring process can be mutually influential because the focus of this

process centers on the needs of the mentee and not the requirements of a program.

Finally, having a mentoring program with the voices of students of color embedded,

within the program, will take away the perception, that students of color are at-risk or not

college ready.

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Hello

Tell your story as a Black or Latinx male student apart of the Top Scholars mentoring

program at CHEN University. In doing so, you will have the opportunity to growth and

improvement of strategies designed to assist Black and Latinx males at CHEN

University. This study will describe the experiences of Black and Latinx males who

successfully completed their freshmen year at an urban catholic University and their

perception on how a student-faculty mentor support program impacted their engagement

and academic achievement. Interviews will be conducted in an attempt to share and learn

from the important stories from this population. We are contacting you now to invite you

to participate in this research study and believe that you will find this experience exciting

and edifying.

By participating in this research study, you will have an opportunity to talk about your

experience at St. John's University with a third-party facilitator.

Please be assured that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that you

may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty, and your information is

confidential. Your name will not be connected with any materials produced for this study.

If you are interested in participating, please let me know by telephone or email. If you

have any further questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at

any time.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Sharod L. Tomlinson

The Experience of Black and Latinx males at St. John's University

Research question	Interview questions
How do Black and Latinx males describe their experience in a first-year mentoring program, at a Private, Catholic, PWI?	Can you tell me a story that helps to describe the impact TOP Scholars mentoring has played in your college experience?
How do students describe the mentoring experience as related to their success in college?	Please describe your experiences with support and mentoring you have received from a faculty or staff member?
	How has your experience been at CHEN University so far?
	Can you describe your experience in the TOP Scholars mentoring program?
	Tell me about your mentor.
	Please describe the program activities and how they contributed to your academic, social and or professional success.
How do Black and Latinx males describe the role that race plays in the mentoring relationship?	What is it like to be a student of color on campus?
	Can you describe what it was like to be a Black or Latinx male in the mentoring program? Is there a story or example you can think of that captures this experience?
	Considering your identity as a Black or Latinx male, what would you like to see in a first-year mentoring program?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERVIEW RESEARCH

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Sharod Tomlinson who is a candidate for a doctorate from the Administrative and Instructional Leadership School of Education from the Graduate School of Education at St. John's University, Queens, NY. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the experiences of Black and Latinx males who successfully completed their freshmen year at an urban catholic University and their perception on how a student-faculty mentor support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. I will be one of approximately 7-12 students being interviewed for this research.

My participation in this project is voluntary. For completing the interview process, I understand that I will be awarded a $10 Visa gift card as gift. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one on my campus will be told.

I understand if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview. All interviews will take place in a mutually agreed upon location that is non-threatening. If I choose to have someone accompany to the interview, I understand there will be a designated location for my guest during my interview.

1. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes (depending on my input). Notes will be written during the interview. I understand that the researcher will be recording my interview with and that all recording will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

2. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies, which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

3. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

4. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John's University. If I have any questions about my rights as a research participant or general questions about the study, you may contact the Committee Chair. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

5. I understand that by participating in this research study, that I will contribute to the literature on Black and Latinx males who successfully completed their freshmen year at an urban catholic University and their perception on how a student-faculty mentor support program impacted their engagement and academic achievement. Results of this study will provide a platform for university leaders to develop policies and procedures to increase retention and completion rates of Black and Latinx males.

_____   _____

           My Signature   Date

_____   _____

          My Printed Name   Signature of the Investigator

For further information, please contact: Sharod Tomlinson

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL

6/14/2021

Attn.: Institutional Review Board (IRB)

_____

The Office of Institutional Review has reviewed the IRB research protocol listed below. Our Office will provide the requested data as specified by this protocol, for the purposes of this study only. Sharod Tomlinson should contact our Office to obtain the needed data once final IRB approval is received.

IRB Protocol Number: IRB-FY2021-428

Project Name: From Admission to Graduation: Finding Meaning, Achievement, and Identity in Student Support Programs

Principal Investigator: Sharod Tomlinson

I understand that if any questions arise regarding this IRB approval or the rights of research participants, our Office can contact Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair, St. John's Institutional Review Board, at (718) 990-1955 or by e-mail at digiuser@stjohns.edu.

Date: 6/14/2021

Veronica Cava, Ph.D.
Assistant Director, Office of Institutional Research
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Jamaica, New York 11439
718-990-2316
cavav@stjohns.edu

REFERENCES

Allen, W. (1992). The color of success: African-American college student outcomes at predominantly White and historically Black public colleges and universities. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(1), 26–45. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.62.1.wv5627665007v701

Andrews, R. W., Herman, J., & Osit, J. L. (1987). Choice: A three-phase model and the implications for policymakers. *College and University, 62*, 207–221. https://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?url=https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/jiuspa/article/download/4595/4218/0&hl=en&sa=T&oi=gsb-gga&ct=res&cd=0&d=10316030586048581113&ei=NJQEYK_bJ4TSyQTEsoCAAQ&scisig=AAGBfm0Os4IZ7VYlx8rBZnrzv1FOAZ_guA

Asgari, S., & Carter, F. (2016). Peer mentors can improve academic performance: A quasi-experimental study of peer mentorship in introductory courses. *Teaching of Psychology, 43*(2), 131–135. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628316636288

Astin, A. W. (1993). *The Jossey-Bass higher and adult education series. What matters in college? Four critical years revisited.* Jossey-Bass.

Atkinson, A. B. (1997). *Measurement of trends in poverty and the income distribution* (No. 9712). Faculty of Economics, University of Cambridge.

Aud, S., Hussar, W., Planty, M., Snyder, T., Bianco, K., Fox, M. A., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Drake, L. (2010). The condition of education 2010. NCES 2010-028. *National Center for Education Statistics.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509940.pdf

Awais, Y. J., & Yali, A. M. (2013). A call for diversity: The need to recruit and retain ethnic Black and Latinx students in art therapy. *Art Therapy, 30*(3), 130–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2013.819284

Bass, L. (2011). *The impact of mentoring on African-American males who test into remedial courses at a predominantly white community college* (Publication No. 3547863) [Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 2011]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Bellon-Harn-Harn, M. L., & Weinbaum, R. K. (2017). Cross-cultural peer-mentoring: Mentor outcomes and perspectives. *Teaching and Learning in Communication Sciences & Disorders, 1*(2), 3. https://doi.org/10.30707/tlcsd1.2Bellon-Harn-harn

Blacknall, T., & Coles, A. (2011). *The role of mentoring in college access and success.* Institute for Higher Education Policy. https://www.liberalartscolleges.com/wp-

content/uploads/2017/12/The-Role-of-Mentoring-in-College-Access-and-Success.pdf

Blackwell, J. E. (1989). Mentoring: An action strategy for increasing Black and Latinx faculty. *Academe, 75*(5), 8–14. https://doi.org/10.2307/40249734

Blake   Beard, S., Bayne, M. L., Crosby, F. J., & Muller, C. B. (2011). Matching by race and gender in mentoring relationships: Keeping our eyes on the prize. *Journal of Social issues, 67*(3), 622–643. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01717.x

Bohannon, R. L., & Bohannon, S. M. (2015). Mentoring: A decade of effort and personal impact. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 81*(2), 31–36. https://search.proquest.com/openview/c7e9c98fc2598593376c9dc59c01fa4c/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=47978

Booker, K., & Brevard, E. (2017). Why mentoring matters: African-American students and the transition to college. *The Mentor: Innovative Scholarship on Academic Advising, 19,* 1–9. https:/doi.org/10.26209/mJ1961245

Bordes, V., & Arredondo, P. (2005). Mentoring and 1st-year Latina/o college students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 4*(2), 114–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192704273855

Bowleg, L. (2017). President Barack Obama: Black man extraordinary and ordinary. *American Journal of Public Health, 107*(1), 20–22. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303552

Branch, A. J. (2004). Modeling respect by teaching about race and ethnic identity in the social studies. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 32*(4), 523–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2004.10473268

Brooks, M., Jones, C., & Burt, I. (2013). Are African-American male undergraduate retention programs successful? An evaluation of an undergraduate African-American male retention program. *Journal of African American Studies, 17*(2), 206–221. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-012-9233-2

Brooms, D. R. (2016). *Being Black, being male on campus: understanding and confronting Black male collegiate experiences.* State University of New York Press.

Brooms, D. R. (2018). 'Building us up': Supporting Black male college students in a black male initiative program. *Critical Sociology, 44*(1), 141–155. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516658940

Brooms, D. R., Goodman, J., & Clark, J. (2015). " We need more of this": Engaging Black men on college campuses. *College Student Affairs Journal, 33*(1), 105–123. https://doi.org/10.1353/csj.2015.0002

Butina, M. (2015). A narrative approach to qualitative inquiry. *Clinical Laboratory Science, 28*(3), 190–196. http://clsjournal.ascls.org/content/ascls/28/3/190.full.pdf

Butler, J. E. (2013). Two steps forward, one step backward: Must this be the future of diversity?. *Liberal Education, 99*(3), n3. https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/two-steps-forward-one-step-backward-must-be-future-diversity

Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2014). *A matter of degrees: practices to pathways. high-impact practices for community college student success.* ERIC Clearinghouse. http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/566748.

Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2014). *Aspirations to achievement: Black and Latinx males and community colleges.* The University of Texas at Austin, Program in Higher Education Leadership. https://www.ccsse.org/docs/MOC_Special_Report.pdf

Chan, M., Kwon, J., Nguyen, D. J., Saunders, K. M., Shah, N., & Smith, K. N. (2019). Indebted over time: Racial differences in student borrowing. *Educational Researcher*, *48*(8), 558–563. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19864969

Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research.* Josey-Bass Publishers.

Clark, E. C., & Kalionzes, J. (2008). Advising students of color and international students. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites (Eds.), *Academic advising: a comprehensive handbook* (pp. 204–225). Jossey-Bass.

Clark, J. S., & Brooms, D. R. (2018). "We get to learn more about ourselves": Black men's engagement, bonding, and self-authorship on campus. *The Journal of Negro Education, 87*(4), 391–403. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.87.4.0391

Cokley, K. (2000). An investigation of academic self-concept and its relationship to academic achievement in African American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *26*(2), 148–164. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798400026002002

Complete College America. (2013). *Guided pathways to success: Boosting college completion.* http://cl.s4.exct.net/?qs=5070f0ff3e10c3924002ca86e228acbd43cb18c55cf53cadcf2211cd38d4367f

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research.* SAGE.

Cox, C. B., Yang, Y., & Dicke-Bohmann, K. (2014). What do Hispanic students want in a mentor? A model of protégé cultural orientation, mentorship expectations, and performance. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 13*(4), 359–376. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192714546747

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches.* SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. SAGE.

Creswell, J. (2015). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

Czarniawska, B. (2004). Narratives in social science research. SAGE Publications. https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209502

D'Augelli, A., & Hershberger, S. (1993). African American undergraduates on a predominantly White campus: Academic factors, social networks, and campus climate. *The Journal of Negro Education, 62*(1), 67–81. https://doi.org/10.2307/2295400

de Brey, C., Musu, L., McFarland, J., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Diliberti, M., Zhang, A., Branstetter, C., & Wang, X. (2019). Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2018. NCES 2019-038. *National Center for Education Statistics.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592833.pdf

Druery, J. E. (2018). *Fostering sense of belonging: A multi-case study of black male retention initiatives* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Louisville]. The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. https://ir.library.louisville.edu/etd/2934/

Druery, J. E., & Brooms, D. R. (2019). "It lit up the campus": Engaging Black males in culturally enriching environments. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 12*(4), 330–340. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000087

DuBois, D. L., & Rhodes, J. E. (2006). Introduction to the special issue: Youth mentoring: Bridging science with practice. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(6)*,* 647–655. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20121

Duncan, L. E. (2003). Black male college students' attitudes toward seeking psychological help. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *29*(1), 68–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798402239229

Feagin, J. R., Vera, H., & Imani, N. (2014). *The agony of education: Black students at a White university.* Routledge.

Fleming, J. (1984). *Blacks in college: a comparative study of student success in Black and White institutions*. Jossey-Bass.

Fries-Britt, S. L., & Turner, B. (2001). Facing stereotypes: A case study of Black students on a White campus. *Journal of College Student Development, 42*(5), 420–429. https://www.proquest.com/docview/195178510

Fries-Britt, S. L. (2004). Attracting the best and the brightest: understanding the challenges and needs of high achieving Black students. In M. C. Brown & K. Freeman (Eds.), *Black colleges at the millennium: New perspectives on policy and praxis* (pp. 161–176). Stamford, CT: Ablex.

Fries-Britt, S., & Turner, B. (2002). Uneven stories: Successful Black collegians at a Black and a White campus. *Review of Higher Education, 25*(3), 315–330. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2002.0012

Gardenhire, A., & Cerna, O. (2016). Boosting college success among Black and Latinx males: promising approaches and next steps. Research Brief. *MDRC*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571136.pdf

Gibson, Y. B. (2014). The value of mentoring programs for African American male college students. *Journal of Mason Graduate Research, 1*(2), 70–82. https://doi.org/10.13021/G8jmgr.v1i2.216

Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (Vols. 1-0). SAGE Publications.

Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction.* Longman.

Gossett, B. J., Cuyjet, M. J., & Cockriel, I. (1996). African Americans' and non–African Americans' sense of mattering and marginality at public, predominantlyWhite institutions. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 29*(3), 37–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/1066568960290306

Greer, T. M., & Brown, P. (2011). Black and Latinx status stress and coping processes among African American college students. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 4*(1), 26–38. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021267

Haber Curran, P., & Tillapaugh, D. (2017). Gender and student leadership: A critical examination. *New Directions for Student Leadership, 2017*(154), 11-22. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20236

Hall, R. R. (2017). Factors contributing to the persistence of African American and Hispanic undergraduate males enrolled at a regional predominantly White institution. *Administrative Issues Journal, 7*(1), 5. https://dc.swosu.edu/aij/vol7/iss1/5

Harper, S. R. (2006a). Peer support for African American male college achievement: Beyond internalized racism and the burden of "acting White." *Journal of Men's Studies, 14*(3), 337–358. https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.1403.337

Harper, S. R. (2006). Reconceptualizing reactive policy responses to Black male college achievement: Implications from a national study. *GSE Publications*, 169. https://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/169

Harper, S. R., & Kuykendall, J. A. (2012). Institutional efforts to improve Black male student achievement: A standards-based approach. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 44*(2), 23–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2012.655234

Harper, S. R., & Williams Jr, C. D. (2013). *Succeeding in the city: A report from the New York City Black and Latino male high school achievement study.* Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/47514130/fulltext_stamped-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1641757975&Signature=DFPlHU~fX9zcOs9KDHgFP8hXF81vgEQjBGKnoqf-Q2amSbHX~A57wlcHHt0N5MPd68wGal0lfBiFiOasWdY4r0~fV0eIYQuCIE81FS2M3jQB3lMXGNCNHfuKsGeGg0ooRKH4lrhuMwEhttps://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/47514130/fulltext_stamped-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1641757975&Signature=DFPlHU~fX9zcOs9KDHgFP8hXF81vgEQjBGKnoqf-Q2amSbHX~A57wlcHHt0N5MPd68wGal0lfBiFiOasWdY4r0~fV0eIYQuCIE81FS2M3jQB3lMXGNCNHfuKsGeGg0ooR

Harper, S. R., & Quaye, S. J. (2007). Student organizations as venues for Black identity expression and development among African American male student leaders. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(2), 127–144. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2007.0012

Harper, S. R., & Williams, Jr, C. D. (2013). *Succeeding in the city: A report from the New York City Black and Latino male high school achievement study.* Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/47514130/fulltext_stamped-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1641759093&Signature=Gm41AO8puxMGq3hVXpAZwDOdQW8GzTesEsRp6ZQV~A3pUCcn4zu6BUBzaWB6PjJxb43fvbzcIC3L3MlA316j7EM8Dk7qqv0lkwohQ8qQ9YiXA~nLNahSs1474TEPiVhnqznMmnWKTW3h

Harris, A., & Leonardo, Z. (2018). Intersectionality, race-gender subordination, and education. *Review of Research in Education, 42*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X18759071

Hodge, D. D. (2017). *The effectiveness of the student support service program on retention at a rural community college* [Doctoral dissertation, Eastern Kentucky University]. Eastern Kentucky University Encompass Online Theses and Dissertations. https://encompass.eku.edu/etd/452

Janesick, V. J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design: minutes, improvisations, and crystallization. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S., *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 379–399). SAGE.

Jaswal, F., & Jaswal, T. M. (2008). Tiered mentoring to leverage student body expertise. New *Directions for Community Colleges, 2008*(144), 55–61. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.345

Johnson, D. J., & Wilson, J. P. (2019). Racial bias in perceptions of size and strength: The impact of stereotypes and group differences. *Psychological Science*, *30*(4), 553–562. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619827529

Johnson Bailey, J., & Cervero, R. M. (2004). Mentoring in black and white: The intricacies of cross cultural mentoring. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *12*(1), 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361126042000183075

Karcher, M. J., Kuperminc, G. P., Portwood, S. G., Sipe, C. L., & Taylor, A. S. (2006). Mentoring programs: A framework to inform program development, research, and evaluation. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(6), 709–725. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20125

Keller, T. E., & Pryce, J. M. (2010). Mutual but unequal: Mentoring as a hybrid of familiar relationship roles. *New Directions for Youth Development*, *2010*(126), 33–50. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.348

Kena, G., Hussar, W., McFarland, J., de Brey, C., Musu-Gillette, L., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Dilberty, M., Barmer, A., Bullock Mann, F., & Dunlop Velez, E. (2016). The condition of education 2016. NCES 2016-144. *National Center for Education Statistics.* http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2016144

Kena, G., Musu-Gillette, L., Robinson, J., Wang, X., Rathbun, A., Zhang, J., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Barmer, A., & Velez, E. D. V. (2015). The condition of education 2015. NCES 2015-144. *National Center for Education Statistics.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED556901.pdf

Kodama, C. M. (2015). Supporting commuter students of color. *New Directions for Student Services, 2015*(150), 45–55. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20126

Knouse, S. B. (2013). Mentoring for Hispanics. *Review of Business, 33*(2), 80–90. https://www.proquest.com/openview/cfe697648a4233bb2fab1a330cdfcce8/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=36534

Kochan, F., Searby, L., George, M. P., & Edge, J. M. (2015). Cultural influences in mentoring endeavors: Applying the cultural framework analysis process. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 4*(2)*, 86–106. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijmce-03-2015-0010

LaVant, B. D., Anderson, J. L., & Tiggs, J. W. (1997). Retaining African American men through mentoring initiatives. *New Directions for Student Services, 80*, 43–53. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.8004

Levine, A., & Nidiffer, J. (1996). *Beating the odds: how the poor get to college.* Jossey-Bass.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* SAGE.

Long, D. (2012). Theories and models of student development. In L. J. Hinchliffe & M. A. Wong (Eds.), *Environments for student growth and development: Librarians and student affairs in collaboration* (pp. 41–55). Association of College & Research Libraries.

Libassi, C. J. (2018, May 23). *The neglected college race gap: Racial disparities among college completers.* Center for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2018/05/23/451186/neglected-college-race-gap-racial-disparities-among-college-completers/.

Maniam, S. (2016, July 18). *Sharp differences over who is hurt, helped by their race.* Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/18/sharp-differences-over-who-is-hurt-helped-by-their-race/.

Manning, K. (1989). *Campus rituals and cultural meaning* (Publication No. 9030387) [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing qualitative research.* SAGE.

Maton, K. I., Wimms, H. E., Grant, S. K., Wittig, M. A., Rogers, M. R., & Vasquez, M. J. (2011). Experiences and perspectives of African American, Latina/o, Asian American, and European American psychology graduate students: A national study. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Black and Latinx Psychology*, *17*(1), 68–78. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021668

McGill, C. M. (2016). "Cultivating ways of thinking": The developmental teaching perspective in academic advising. *New Horizons, 28*(1), 50–54. https://doi.org/10.1002/nha3.20131

Mervis, J. (2011). Weed-out courses hamper diversity. *Science, 334*(6061), 1333–1333. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.334.6061.1333

Miller, M. A., & Murray, C. (2005). Advising academically underprepared students. *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources.* https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Academically-underprepared-students.aspx

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* SAGE Publications.

Museus, S. D., & Ravello, J. N. (2010). Characteristics of academic advising that contribute to racial and ethnic Black and Latinx student success at predominantly White institutions. *NACADA Journal, 30*(1), 47–58. https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-30.1.47

Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The impact of racial microaggressions on mental health: Counseling implications for clients of color. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 92*(1), 57–66. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00130.x

Nadworny, E., 2019). College Completion Rates Are Up, But The Numbers Will Still Surprise You. https://www.npr.org/2019/03/13/681621047/college-completion-rates-are-up-but-the-numbers-will-still-surprise-you

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Indicator 23: Postsecondary graduation rates*. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_red.asp.

Nelson Laird, T. F., Bridges, B. K., Morelon-Quainoo, C. L., Williams, J. M., & Holmes, M. S. (2007). African American and Hispanic student engagement at minority serving and predominantly White institutions. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2007.0005

Nutt, C. L. (2003). *Academic advising and student retention and persistence.* NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources. https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advising-and-Student-Retention-article.aspx

Palmer, R. T., Davis, R. J., & Maramba, D. C. (2011). The impact of family support on the success of Black men at an historically Black university: Affirming the revision of Tinto's theory. *Journal of College Student Development, 52*(5), 577–597. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2011.0066

Palmer, R. T., Wood, J. L., Dancy, T. E., & Strayhorn, T. L. (2014). *Black male collegians: increasing access, retention, and persistence in higher education: ASHE higher education report 40: 3.* John Wiley & Sons.

Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 7*(2), 156–176. https://doi.org/10.1177/074355489272003

Phinney, J. S., Torres Campos, C. M., Padilla Kallemeyn, D. M., & Kim, C. (2011). Processes and outcomes of a mentoring program for Latino college freshmen. *Journal of Social Issues, 67*(3), 599–621. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01716.x

Proctor, S. L., Nasir, A., Wilson, T., Li, K., & Castrillon, P. (2018). Retention and persistence of African-American students in school psychology programs. *Psychology in the Schools*, *55*, 506–522. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22124

Rallis, S. F., & Rossman, G. B. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research.* SAGE.

Rentschler, G. J., & Gasior, R. M. (2011). Student peer mentoring: A tool for clinical educators. *Perspectives on Issues in Higher Education, 14*(1), 29–35. https://doi.org/10.1044/ihe14.1.29

Rogers, M. R., & Molina, L. E. (2006). Exemplary efforts in psychology to recruit and retain graduate students of color. *The American Psychologist, 61*(2), 143–156. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.61.2.143

Rodríguez, L. F., & Oseguera, L. (2015). Our deliberate success: Recognizing what works for Latina/o students across the educational pipeline. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *14*(2), 128–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192715570637

Romero, A. J., Edwards, L. M., Fryberg, S. A., & Orduña, M. (2013). Resilience to discrimination stress across ethnic identity stages of development. Jo*urnal of Applied Social Psychology, 44*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12192

Schelbe, L., Becker, M. S., Spinelli, C., & McCray, D. (2019). First generation college students' perceptions of an academic retention program. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 19(*5), 61–76. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1240012.pdf

The Seven Centers. (2014). *Advancing the success of boys and men of color.*. https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-assets/91393_book_item_91393.pdf

Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P. K., Yuan, X., Nathan, A., & Bhimdiwala, A. (2017). Completing college: A national view of student completion rates--Fall 2011 cohort. (Signature Report No. 14). *National Student Clearinghouse.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580318.pdf

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*(2), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201

Sheu, H.-B., & Sedlacek, W. H. (2004). An exploratory study of help-seeking attitudes and coping strategies among college students by race and gender. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 37*(3), 130–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2004.11909755

Sinanan, A. (2016). The value and necessity of mentoring African American college students at PWIs. *Journal of Pan African Studies, 9*(8), 155–166. https://okxa.org/wp-content_81.pdf

Snowden, M., & Hardy, T. (2012). Peer mentorship and positive effects on student mentor and mentee retention and academic success. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 14*, 76–92. http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/16921/1/published_peer_mentorship.pdf

Spencer, R. (2006). Understanding the mentoring process between adolescents and adults. *Youth & Society*, *37*(3), 287–315. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558405278263

Stange, K. (2015). Differential pricing in undergraduate education: Effects on degree production by field. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 34*(1), 107–135. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21803

Stebleton, M. J., Soria, K. M., & Huesman Jr, R. L. (2014). First   generation students' sense of belonging, mental health, and use of counseling services at public research universities. *Journal of College Counseling, 17*(1), 6-20. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1882.2014.00044.x

Stewart, D. (2017). *African American males' descriptions of stereotypes in classrooms: a phenomenological study* (Publication No. 10266029) [Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2008). The role of supportive relationships in facilitating African American males' success in college. *NASPA Journal, 45*(1), 26–48. https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1906

Strayhorn, T. L. (2009). Bridging the gap from high school to college for "at risk" first-year students. *E-Source for College Transitions, 6*(3), 9–11.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2015). Reframing academic advising for student success: From advisor to cultural navigator. *NACADA Journal, 35*(1), 56–63. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1069273.pdf

Strayhorn, T. L. (2018). *College students' sense of belonging: a key to educational success for all students.* Routledge.

Stuart, J., & Jose, P. E. (2014). The protective influence of family connectedness, ethnic identity, and ethnic engagement for New Zealand Māori adolescents. *Developmental Psychology, 50*(6), 1817–1826. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036386

Suhre, C. J. M., Jansen, E. P. W. A., & Harskamp, E. G. (2007). Impact of degree program satisfaction on the persistence of college students. *Higher Education, 54*(2), 207–226. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-005-2376-5

Sutton, E. M., & Terrell, M. C. (1997). Identifying and developing leadership opportunities for African American men. *New Directions for Student Services, 1997*(80), 55–64. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.8005

Sverdlik, A., Hall, N. C., McAlpine, L., & Hubbard, K. (2018). Journeys of a PhD student and unaccompanied minors. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 13*, 361–388. https://doi.org/10.28945/4113

Swecker, H. K., Fifolt, M., & Searby, L. (2013). Academic advising and first-generation college students: A quantitative study on student retention. *NACADA Journal, 33*(1), 46–53. https://doi.org/10.12930/nacada-13-192

Taylor, A. C. (2005). *Improving the academic achievement of African American males: A case study of African American male perceptions of attempted instructional strategies.* (Publication No. 3175979) [Doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University]. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global.

Tram, J. M., Nwankwo, N., Khan, A. N., & Sabado, J. A. (2020). Impact of faculty mentoring on ethnic and racial minority student program satisfaction. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000231

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Quintana, S. M., Lee, R. M., Cross, W. E., Rivas-Drake, D., Schwartz, S. J., Syed, M., Yip, T., & Seaton, E. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity during adolescence and into young adulthood: An integrated conceptualization. *Child Development, 85*(1), 21–39. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12196

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Progress in our schools.* https://www.ed.gov/k-12reforms

U.S. Department of Education. Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development. (2016). *Advancing diversity and inclusion in higher education: key data highlights focusing on race and ethnicity and promising practices.* http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/415511.

Vasquez, M. J. T., & Jones, J. M. (2006). Increasing the number of psychologists of color: Public policy issues for affirmative diversity. *American Psychologist, 61*(2), 132–142. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.61.2.132

Wood, J. L. (2017, April 7). *Addressing hurdles to academic success for Black and Latinx males.* The EvoLLLution. https://evolllution.com/opinions/addressing-hurdles-academic-success-Black and Latinx -males/.

Wood, J. L., & Palmer, R. T. (2015). *Black Men in higher education: a guide to ensuring student success.* Routledge.

Wright-Harp, W., & Cole, P. A. (2008). A mentoring model for enhancing success in graduate education. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders, 35*(Spring), 4–16. https://pubs.asha.org/doi/pdf/10.1044/cicsd_35_S_4

Wright-Harp, W., & Muñoz, E. (2000). Preparing bilingual speech-language pathologists: The development of an innovative master's degree program. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, *23*(4), 290–302. https://doi.org/10.1177/088840640002300406

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: design and methods.* SAGE.

Vita

Name	*Sharod L. Tomlinson*
Baccalaureate Degree	*Bachelor of Arts/ Science, John Jay College, New York, Major: Human Resource Management*
Date Graduated	*June, 2006*
Other Degree	*Master of Science, New School University, New York, Major: Non-Profit Management*
Date Graduated	*May, 2010*