A Study of African American men who Persisted in Higher Education: A Case for Leadership Development through Mentoring

By

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ABSTRACT


This phenomenological study is intended offer some possible solutions for poor graduation rates amongst African American men in higher education (Harper, 2012, Sedlacek, 2007), and to determine if mentoring African American men directly leads to their persistence in higher education through the development of: (1) Non-Cognitive Variables (2) Leadership Skills and (3) Identity Negotiation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to give thanks to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without Him, I am and can do nothing. I want to also give a special thanks to those who paved the way for me to have this opportunity to pursue my education. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears were shed by most of whom I will never know. A special thanks is also due to my family, especially my mother. My mother not only motivated me to attend college, but she also helped me to navigate my educational pursuit. I am also very thankful for my deceased father. Although he was never a major part of my life, he is at least partly responsible for my being here today. Even more importantly, I am especially thankful for my wife and daughter. They have been my motivation through the latter years of my young life. They have sacrificed a lot for me, and for that I am grateful. My wife is my best friend and has been there for me when no one else was. She even encouraged me to continue my undergraduate education when I had no motivation to continue. I love my family, and I am excited to say, we made it.

I also want to take a moment to thank each of the individuals who have served on my dissertation committee. Dr. Lori Robertson, Dr. Fonda Harris, and Dr. Brad Patterson were encouraging every step of the way and have helped me stay the course and make it through this strenuous process. When I wanted to give up, my committee encouraged and challenged me to continue on. Thank you. I am thankful to Tennessee Temple, the instructors, and everyone who played a role in making this possible.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Due to low graduation rates among African American (AA) men in higher education, there has been an increase of research regarding AA men in higher education (Allen, T.D. & Eby, T.L., 2003; Basker, B.T., Mocevar, S.P., & Johnson, W.B., 2003; Harper, 2012; Marbley, A.F., Bonner, F.A., & McKisick, S., 2007; Ortiz-Walters, R., & Gilson, L.L., 2005; Strayhorn, L.T. & Cleveland, M.T., 2007; Sáenz, Ponjuan, Helig, Reddick, Fries-Britt, & Hall, 2008; Quaye, 2009). Many studies have begun to highlight the fact that non-traditional students such as AA men are more likely to face obstacles in their educational pursuits, which can therefore lead to their failure to persist in higher education (Harper, 2006; Sáenz, Ponjuan, Helig, Reddick, Fries-Britt, & Hall, 2008; Quaye, 2009). Much of this research details the disparities and difficulties of AA men in college (Wilson, 1999; Quaye, 2009). To describe the status of AA men in higher education, some scholars have gone as far as to describe this population of students as: “vanishing,” and “disappearing” from the educational scene (Harper, 2006; Saenz, Ponjuan, Helig, Reddick, Fries-Britt & Hall, 2009). Often overlooked, however, are the structural and historical factors, such as racial, programmatic, and identity barriers that work to inhibit success in reaching educational outcomes (Willie & Reddick, 2010; Quaye, 2009).

The Research Problem

Four percent of all college students are black men (Toldson, 2012). Yet, 67.6% of AA male freshman will never complete their degrees (Nealy, 2009). The AA male population in higher education is not only exceptionally low (Dellums Commission, 2006; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Palmer et al., 2010; Levin et al., 2007), but enrollment and persistence rates have remained
astonishingly lower than all other groups of students (Tate, 2008). According to the U.S. Department of Education, the graduation rate of AA men in 2012 was a dismal 39%, which represents an achievement gap of more than 20 percentage points with White male students (JBHE, 2013). Furthermore, Black male college completion rates are the lowest among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups in U.S. higher education (Harper, 2012; Strayhorn, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

While most research on the subject is valid and has a place, it does little to move the AA man forward in his educational pursuits (Harper, 2012; Willie & Reddick, 2010). More importantly, available research has not helped administrators in higher education to implement the necessary structure and processes that help AA men complete their education (Harper, 2006a, & 2012; Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003).

Further, there has been very little research conducted on the causes of success of AA men in higher education (Harper, 2012). In the largest ever-qualitative research study on Black undergraduate men, Harper (2012) offered what he says is the solution for facilitating AA male persistence in higher education:

To increase their educational attainment, the popular one-sided emphasis on failure and low performing Black male undergraduates must be counterbalanced with insights gathered from those who somehow manage 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, to name a few. (Pg. 3)
While literature emphasized many of the problems faced by AA men in higher education (Harper, 2006a, Willie & Reddick, 2010), far too little is known about their educational development. Therefore, there is a great need for more research that focuses on the success stories of AA male graduates (Strayhorn, 2010; Willie & Reddick, 2010). This research will address some of the problems experienced by AA men in higher education, but only for the purpose of showing what has been written on the subject, and to provide a framework for how it is indeed possible for AA men to overcome their barriers.

**Conceptual Framework & Research Questions**

Flowing out of the literature review is the conceptual framework of this study: Mentoring of AA men in higher education facilitates the development of non-cognitive (motivational) variables, leadership skills, and identity negotiation (See Figure 1).

The overarching question asked in this research is: Why are some AA college men overcoming barriers while their counterparts are not persistent in higher education? The following questions seek to uncover details from the mentor-protégé relationship to determine if the relationship had an impact on the development of non-cognitive variables, leadership skills, and identity negotiation amongst AA college male graduates.

1. Does mentoring help initiate non-cognitive variables in AA men in higher education?

2. Does mentoring have an impact on leadership development among AA males enrolled in higher education?

   a. Do mentors’ efforts help equip their protégés to be leaders?

3. Does mentoring have an impact on identity negotiation?
a. Do mentors help AA men in higher education overcome racial barriers?

b. Does the mentor relationship impact the way the protégé views himself and the world around him?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of AA men who have persisted in higher education and to determine if a mentor relationship helped facilitate leadership development in their lives. Further, this study seeks to examine the impact that mentoring has on the areas of leadership development, non-cognitive variables and identity negotiation of AA men in higher education. The intent therefore, is also to learn if mentoring has a direct impact on the persistence of AA men in higher education. This study does not seek to highlight the many
obstacles AA men encounter. Focusing on what is wrong with the AA male in higher education is counterproductive to improving retention and graduation rates among this population of students (Harper, 2006a, Harper, 2012; Trevino, Gonzalez, & Trevino, 1997, Sedlacek, 2007).

This study will offer some suggestions for pedagogical initiatives in higher education that facilitate positive relationships with AA men. By developing workshops and programs and re-thinking curriculum design with the AA male in mind, institutions of education will begin to experience more success of AA male students (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003). More importantly, this study highlighted and captured the success stories of AA men who have persisted in higher education. Until recently, there has been very little research that has attempted to understand what leads to the persistence of AA men in higher education (Harper, 2012). Many studies have focused primarily on the obstacles to their persistence (Harper, 2012).

**Relevance of Study**

In the last 12 years, the enrollment of AA men in institutions of higher education has increased from less than 20% to nearly 40% (Digest of Education, 2011). However, despite an increase in AA male enrollment, the disparity of AA male persistence in higher education has not improved at the same rate of enrollment (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). In order to adjust to the changing demographics of the student population in higher education, there appears to be more of a need for administrators in higher education to adapt accordingly - in order to meet the demands caused by changing demographics. More AA men in higher education subsequently require an understanding of what helps AA men to persist in higher education (Harper, 2012).

There is a growing need to develop more programs that are strategic in engaging the AA male to get him to persist in higher education (Harper, 2012; Sedlacek, 2004; Strayhorn, 2010).
To help AA men in higher education, one must not only understand the obstacles faced by the AA male, but one must also understand the reasons for his success and begin to re-think the way success is measured (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005; Sedlacek, 2007). Traditionally, success has been measured through the use of cognitive variables, which can be examined through an individual’s test performance. “While traditional merit-based approaches have not entirely failed, they have tended to dismiss the unique contextual and institutional barriers that many ethnic minorities must negotiate in order to compete and be academically successful” (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005; Sedlacek, 2007). Such barriers include: racism, finances, and self-awareness, to name a few (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005; Sedlacek, 2007). Further, conversations regarding AA male persistence must be initiated to gain an understanding into the non-cognitive factors that motivate AA men to persist in higher education (Harper, 2012; Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005; Sedlacek, 2007).

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is based upon non-cognitive variables that Sedlacek (2004, 2007, 2010) found to be imperative for the persistence of AA men in higher education. In *Beyond the big test: non-cognitive assessment in higher education*, Sedlacek (2004) mentioned that non-cognitive factors are more accurate predictive measures of success for AA men. He also mentioned the eight factors that he identified in AA men who have persisted in higher education, beyond the traditional intellectual or cognitive variables. These motivational factors are: (1) positive self-concept, (2) realistic self-appraisal, (3) successfully handling the system (racism), (4) preference for long-term goals, (5) availability of strong support person, (6) leadership experience, (7) community involvement, and (8) knowledge acquired in a field. Each
of these factors has been tested and validated to be predictors of persistence in higher education for AA men (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, 2010).

**Delimitation of the Study**

One factor that influenced this research is the fact that so little research had been conducted on the reasons for AA male persistence in higher education. However, there has been a growing amount of research that focuses on the negative experiences of many AA men in higher education (Strayhorn, 2010; Harper, 2012). Objectivity in this research is maintained through the use of a validated survey instrument and through a validated line of open-ended questioning and information-checking with each participant. This methodology is explained in more detail in chapter III.

**Definition of Terms**

Key terms used throughout this study are as follows.

1. **African American (AA)** – Individuals who identify themselves as African American, Black, and non-Hispanic. This also refers to a group of individuals of African heritage born in the United States who are also descendents of slaves (Jackson, 2001, p. 14).

2. **Mentor** - a person who offers his or her expertise to a student with the agreed-upon goal of having the student grow and develop specific competencies (Murray, 1991). While there may be only limited interaction between the mentor and protégé, mentoring could encompass any one of four key components: 1) it provides emotional and/or psychological support, 2) it is a relationship focused on achievement, 3) there is role modeling, and 4) there is direct interaction with the protégé (Jacobi, 1991, p. 513). Mentoring can be formal or informal.
3. **Non-Cognitive Variables** - These are factors that relate to adjustment, motivation, and perceptions, rather than to the traditional verbal and quantitative factors (Sedlacek, 2004).

4. **Non-traditional Students** - People of Color, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (Sedlacek, Benjamin, Schlosser, & Sheu, 2007).

5. **Persistence** – Completion of an undergraduate degree from a four-year institution.

6. **Predominately White Institutions (PWI)** – Institutions where more than 50 percent of the student population is white.

**Summary**

This research may provide educators with insight and clear recommendations on how they can begin to provide AA men the tools they need to persist in higher education (Sedlacek, 2007, Strayhorn, 2010, Harper, 2012). This study will also add to research relating to the persistence of AA men in higher education. As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to understand the issues that AA men face which could prove helpful for professionals in higher education to understand what they can do to help more AA men persist in higher education.

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on AA men in college and evaluates some of the research that has been conducted within the last 10-20 years on their plight in higher education. Chapter 2 also takes a look at non-cognitive factors that seem to be facilitated through mentors and their relationships with AA men in higher education.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines the history of AA men in higher education and their evolution in higher education. The intricacies of the mentoring relationship and the impact that mentoring has on AA men who persisted in higher education are also studied.

The review of literature addresses successful college completion; the relationship between mentoring, identity negotiation, persistence; non-cognitive variables that might be useful for facilitating and supporting AA college men; and knowledge gaps.

Additionally, although more AAs attend Predominately White Institutions (PWI’s) than they do Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), they continue to experience racial tension and inadequate social lives, which causes them to feel a sense of alienation (Allen, 2010; Cuyjet, 2006). A 360-degree view of the history of AA men in higher education helps to provide the framework by which educators can work from to improve AA male persistence in higher education.

Most of the research that currently exists on AA men in higher education points out the obstacles that prevent the persistence of AA men in higher education (Harper, 2012; Strayhorn, 2010). One study even asserted that AA men were not as interested in education as they were in drugs (Kacich, 2010). A few studies mentioned the importance of mentoring on this population of students (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Brown, 2006; 2006; Harper, 2004, 2006; Harper & Wolley, 2002), but not as a means for facilitating non-cognitive variables and leadership development.
Further, there has been more literature revealing the effects of non-cognitive variables on AA male success (Bush, 2010; Sedlacek, 2004). Traditionally, academic success has been marginalized to the measurement of cognitive variables, but research has suggested that social factors do a much better job predicting AA male persistence in higher education than cognitive assessments that are used in education today (Bush, 2010; Sedlacek, 2004).

**Historical Perspective of African American Men in College**

It is no secret that AA men long for brotherhood. They long to be a part of something that gives validation to who they are. This was evident as early as 1906, when seven AA men at Cornell University decided to form what is known as the first Black Greek Organization. These seven men formed a fraternity because they realized the need for a strong bond of brotherhood (Alpha Phi Alpha, A Brief History, 2013). These men understood that separate, they faced the harsh reality of being an anomaly on a predominately white campus, but together they could offer one another much needed support and be a voice of hope and love for all mankind (Alpha Phi Alpha, A Brief History, 2013). What started out as a social group offered these men what they could not receive otherwise, campus integration. Research suggested that a lack of a sense of belonging is one of the many reasons that minority students cite as a cause for departure from college prior to receiving a degree (Cuyjet & Associates, 2006; Strayhorn, 2008).

At the onset of higher education, AA students faced strenuous opposition in their pursuit of a college degree. In those early days there were only a few schools, such as Oberlin College and Berea College, who would allow minority students the opportunity to pursue their degree (Fleming, 1984; Wilson, 1998). A lack of equal educational opportunity gave rise to AAs beginning to teach one another, which naturally gave way to what are known today as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). The first such university, Cheyney
University, was established in 1830 in Pennsylvania. The next historically black colleges were Lincoln University in 1854 and Wilberforce University in 1856 (Brown, 1999; Fleming, 1984; Wilson, 1998). Since HBCUs were not funded publicly, they had to receive funding through the Freedman’s Bureau, black churches, local communities, private philanthropist, and northern missionaries (Brown, 1999). It was not until 1890 that schools began to receive federal funds for the purpose of providing education to recently freed slaves (Fleming, 1984). The new funding allocation stemmed from the Second Morrill Act, which established Negro land grant colleges, allowing AAs into white colleges (Fleming, 1984). While the Second Morrill Act seemed like progress, HBCUs were clearly inferior to their PWI counterparts. Facilities were subpar, they had teachers who were not adequately prepared, and they simply lacked many of the necessary resources that would have come from state and local funding (Pounds, 1987).

As time progressed, and following the the court case Brown v. Board of Education (Jones, 2001), more and more AAs began attending PWIs. While HBCUs do exist today, most AAs, male and female, attend PWIs due to geographical location, (Jones, 2001). Strange and Banning (2001) stated the problem posed when most AAs attend PWIs:

Campuses of a particular cultural, ethnic, or age-based group are more likely to attract, satisfy, and retain individuals who share traits in common with the dominant group. Those who share similarities are predicted to be most attracted to that environment and those who bear little resemblance are least likely to be reinforced,…in which case they become dissatisfied and leave that environment (p. 6).

Strange and Banning (2001) mentioned cultural issues that presented an added challenge for institutions of higher education to engage AA men in a way that is meaningful. In Flowers’ study (2004), findings showed that the development of students is impacted by their experiences
in and out of the classroom. Flower’s study therefore suggested that a student’s engagement outside the classroom played a huge role in how comfortable that student was within that institution. Engagement outside the classroom was consequently vital for success within (Flowers, 2004).

Following the Second World War and the civil rights legislation, AA enrollment increased significantly (Garibaldi, 1991). By 1972, PWIs were being encouraged to recruit AA students if they hoped to receive federal funds (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971; Thomas, 1981). Increased funding led to more than a 2% increase in the number of AA students enrolled in higher education (Thomas, 1981). By the 1970s, more than seventy-five percent of AAs enrolled in college were attending PWIs (Fleming, 1985; Latiker, 2003).

**Current Status**

Today, there are many colleges that have implemented programs geared towards AA men in higher education. According to the Ohio State University website, Ohio State established the Bell National Resource Center in 2002, which is geared entirely towards helping AA men persist in higher education (*About the bell national resource center*. (n.d.). Retrieved from odi.osu.edu/centers/bell-national-resource-center/about.html).

The mission of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male is to examine and address critical issues in society that impact the quality of life for African American males throughout the lifespan. The Center plans to achieve these goals by conducting robust research studies and evaluations that inform social policy and theory on African American males and developing research-based programs, models, and initiatives that could be replicated at other institutions. To this end, the Center expects to serve as a national resource for those individuals interested in learning
about best practices and groundbreaking research on African American males throughout the lifespan. *(About the bell national resource center.* (n.d.). Retrieved from odi.osu.edu/centers/bell-national-resource-center/about.html).

Another large PWI that has found success with this type of program is Georgia State University (GSU) in Atlanta. The difference between OSU and GSU, however, is that GSU has an entire department geared towards AA student persistence. They led the nation in the total number of bachelor degrees conferred to AA students in 2012 (Diverse: Issues in Higher Education via www.gsu.edu). The www.gsu.edu website also said:

“With a 17 percent one-year increase, Georgia State outpaced all other non-profit colleges and universities in awarding bachelor degrees to African-American students in the magazine’s rankings of the “Top 100 Undergraduate Degree Producers.” GSU conferred 1,262 bachelor’s degrees to African-Americans in 2012, climbing past Florida A&M and North Carolina A&T State University.”

There are many other colleges with Black Male Initiative programs including: Philander Smith College in Little Rock Arkansas, The City University of New York, Southern Illinois University, University system of Georgia, and Louisiana State University. While this list is not exhaustive, it does suggest that colleges are beginning to place an increased focus on AA male persistence in higher education. Further, colleges that boast the smallest graduation completion gaps between AA students and other students, are the schools that have programs and or departments that work to help AA students persist in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

**Northwestern University**
According to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), Northwestern University (NU) graduates 88% of its AA students. NU has an AA Student Affairs department that falls underneath the umbrella of Multicultural Student Affairs. The NU website said the purpose of the Multicultural Student Affairs department is to serve traditionally underserved communities, including AA Student Affairs (Multicultural student affairs. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.northwestern.edu/msa/our-departments/aasa/). Their AA Student affairs program fulfills their promise to serve AA students by providing “programs, services, and resources related to student advising, advocacy, outreach, and holistic development” (Multicultural student affairs. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.northwestern.edu/msa/our-departments/aasa/).

University of Pennsylvania

University of Pennsylvania (Penn) currently graduates 93% of its AA student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). To service AA students, Penn has an AA Student Resource Center. According to their website:

We are a resource center dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of faculty, staff, and students at the University of Pennsylvania with a particular focus on those of African descent. Our services include advocacy, information and referral, workshops and informational sessions, and many advertised events throughout the year (Welcome to the african-american resource center's (aarc's) homepage. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.upenn.edu/aarc/).

Georgetown University

At Georgetown, AA students have The Black House to go to. The Georgetown website says the mission of The Black House was “to assess and meet the needs of students of color by implementing programs, events, and dialogue in a community-centered space” (Center for
multicultural equity & access. (n.d.). Retrieved from cmea.georgetown.edu/blackhouse/).

Georgetown celebrates a graduation rate of 87% for AA students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

NU, Penn, and Georgetown are just a few examples of how some colleges and universities are placing an increased emphasis on AA student persistence. The analysis is from the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education and the U.S. Department of Education (JBHE, 2013).

(Colleges and Universities are Ranked by the Smallest Gap in Black-White Graduation Rates, 2013)

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16
The decision to focus only on AA men was a necessary one because not only are AA men under-represented in higher education, but research also tends to compare the AA student population to other races (Astin, Davis et al., 2004; Guiffrida, 2005; Jenkins, 2001; Kim, 2002; Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quaninoo, Williams, & Homes, 2007), which is not necessarily an adequate comparison of the AA male’s experience.

Research on Mentoring in Higher Education

Mentoring Non-traditional students

When considering mentor relationships for AA and other non-traditional students, it was beneficial to consider issues of diversity for an increased impact (Scisney-Matlock and Matlock, 2001; Sedlacek, Benjamin, Schlosser, & Sheu, 2007; Sedlacek, 2010). There are several reasons mentoring is important according to these authors:

First, nontraditional students have been historically under-represented in academia, and as a result, there is little that is known about mentoring for non-traditional groups of people, including what works for whom and under what set of circumstances. Second, students of color represent a small, but growing number of new doctorates in psychology (Kohout & Wicherski, 2003). Research has therefore suggested that this trend also holds true in other disciplines, making it critical for all educational professionals to understand how mentoring relationships for non-traditional students differ from relationships with traditional students (Sedlacek, 2004, Sedlacek, 2007). It is further important to understand how to mentor traditional students with equal effectiveness (Schlosser, 2005).

The issue of mentoring for AA students is especially important due to the findings of research (Loeser, 2008; Schlosser et al., 2005; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009) that suggested that mentoring experiences are different for those in socially-privileged groups (e.g.,
Whites, men, Christians, heterosexuals) than those in socially-oppressed groups (e.g., People of Color, women, LGBT persons, religious minorities). Finally, it is also known that the presence (or absence) of mentors of color is an important variable in the educational and professional development of students of color in higher education (Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009). The need for mentors for students of color has been stressed in other scholarly work as well (Strayhorn & Sadler, 2009; Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008). Therefore, addressing the under-representation of nontraditional students and faculty in academia is critical, and one in which mentoring can play an important role.

**Mentoring African American Men**

As research suggested, AA male students have trouble with a variety of identity, self-esteem and even racial battle fatigue issues while attending college (Sedlacek, 2004; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Racial battle fatigue is often demonstrated through frustration, anger, exhaustion, physical avoidance, and emotional withdrawal amongst AA men at PWIs (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). In an attempt to rectify this dilemma, there has been an increasing amount of research conducted on the impact of mentoring relationships on a person’s identity and self-esteem (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Brown, 2006; Harper & Wolley, 2002; Harper, 2004, 2006; Marbley et. al, 2007). Mentors are individuals who take time to encourage and motivate students while demonstrating to their protégés, “we are in this together” (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell & Young, 2005). Mentors tend to be of the mindset that they are going to do whatever they can to make the life of their protégé a better one. Lee (1991) conducted one of the first studies on the impact of mentoring of AAs in higher education. She provided evidence that mentoring programs can have an enormous impact on AA men in higher education (Lee, 1991; Loeser, 2008), and that protégés often feel their mentors provide insight on how to navigate the
academic side of college life, as well as the campus culture (Lee, 1991). Lee’s research was one of the first to identify a sense of alienation as one of the many reasons AA men do not persist in higher education (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Brown, 2006; Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Harper & Wolley, 2002; Harper, 2004, 2006; Harper, 2012). Lee’s (1991) study also showed that mentoring AA men instills in them a heightened sense of social responsibility. Another study confirmed the impact of mentoring, showing that AA men who receive mentoring remain on campus and show a marked improvement in self-esteem, and stand a better chance of navigating the waters of higher education (Sedlecek, 2004; Marbley, 2007).

Research also presented several obstacles (Sedlacek, Benjamin, Schlosser, L. Z., & Sheu, 2007) that repel students of color from receiving mentoring while in college. Some of the obstacles according to the authors were: (a) a lack of faculty role models of color (Marbley et. al, 2007), (b) differences in cultural values between mentor and protégé (Darling, Bogat, Cavell, Murphy, Sanchez, 2006), (c) not understanding the importance of good mentoring to succeed in one’s persistence in higher education (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008), and (d) reluctance entering a cross-race advising or mentoring relationship (Sedlacek, 2007). In addition, research suggested that mentoring directly impacts not only retention, but that there is a lack of faculty related mentoring for AA students in higher education (Strayhorn & Seddler, 2009).

Because mentoring has been consistently linked to increased retention, (Harper, 2012; Sedlacek, 2004a; Sedlacek, 2007; Vann Lynch, 2002) it is further evidence that AA students and males in particular could benefit from having more AA instructors in the classrooms. However, research also suggested that it is sometimes difficult for AA faculty members to help AA students because minority faculty tend to experience some of the same issues as AA men, such
as insufficient mentoring and professional development (Sedlacek, Benjamin, Schlosser, L. Z., & Sheu, 2007).

**Mentoring as a counteractive measure**

Not only does mentoring impact AA men positively, but it also helps them combat some of the barriers they face on a day-to-day basis. One of the barriers is the label “at-risk” which often stems from lack of academic preparedness and motivation (Harper, 2012; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). At-risk refers to students who are more likely to withdraw from college (Henlon, Pleskac, 2011). Some examples of “at-risk” are: those who come from single parent homes, are low income, and/or speak English as a second language (Henlon, Pleskac, 2011). One of the more prevalent at-risk factors experienced by many AA men other than low-income, is the first generation risk factor. First-generation is constituted as students whose parents did not complete college with a four-year degree (McConnell, 2000). Although the national average of first generation students among all entering freshman was only 38.5% in 1971, it was a staggering 62.9% for AA students in that same year (Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Young, 2007). In 2005, those numbers for first generation AA students decreased to just over 20% for AA students, which although is a significant decrease, could be a cause for concern because the rate of AAs without a college education is still proportionally high and has not translated into comparable graduation rates (Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Young, 2007). The explanation for a decrease in first-generation student enrollment numbers could therefore be that first generation AAs are having a difficult time gaining access into four-year institutions (Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Young, 2007). It is therefore beneficial to understand the first generation barrier that many AA men in higher education experience.
Harper (2012) found that mentoring is one of the key denominators to each of the students’ success in his study. Harper (2012) said that one of the main reasons AA men cited for their persistence in higher education was that they had parents, mentors, and even influential teachers who had high beliefs in them and served as motivation for their persistence in college.

First Generation Students

Many high school students who have parents with minimal education face transitions that can be both exciting and frightening all at the same time. Some of the first generation barriers are: lack of self-confidence, inappropriate expectations or knowledge about the college environment, and lack of faculty involvement in programs (Gardener, Holley, 2011). Each of these barriers that are faced by first generation college students could possibly be solved with the presence of a mentor. Rodriguez (2003), and Strayhorn & Seddler (2009) affirmed the need for mentors. Their studies attributed some of the positive forces that had a positive impact on first-generation students to: pre-mentoring or preparing children to accept education related mentors who would later enter their lives; the role of home, school, peer counselors; the importance of a sense of belonging; and the role of the informal and formal curriculum. Gardener & Holley (2011) stated that first generation students are different from traditional students in that they view college completely different than their counterparts. They are different in their demographic characteristics, they place a different level of importance on college, their aspirations are different, and their commitment level to the institution is lower (CSA, 2011; McConnell, 2000). Not only do first-generation students view their college experiences differently, but they also typically lack time-management skills, true experiences or knowledge of the economic realities of college life, and the impersonal bureaucratic nature of institutions of higher education, (Alexander, 2009).
Researchers have said that in order for AA students to achieve success academically, colleges must do a better job at providing programs and services that counteract some of these weaknesses (Harper, 2012; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009; Harper & Quaye, 2009). Intervention strategies can be devised to facilitate academic success and persistence to the fulfillment of the students’ educational objectives (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). An example of such a program is one that provides mentoring for students (Harper, 2012; McConnell, 2000; Sedlacek, 2007). Mentoring programs have demonstrated their effectiveness in helping to solve retention issues because of their ability to offer students role models who are able to provide them with guidance throughout their matriculation within the institution (Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009). Researchers have also said that faculty involvement can play a significant role in the progression of students (Marbley, 2007). Research has learned that students frequently cited one of three following reasons for their success in college: the caring attention they received from at least one teacher, a specific academic program, and/or an aspect of their college’s culture (Harper & Quaye, 2009). “First generation students who never met with their advisor to discuss plans had a 58% persistence rate compared to 87% for those who met with their advisor at least once a semester” (Duggan, 2001, p. 8).

Non-Cognitive Variables

Research also suggested that AA men are influenced by more than the cognitive variables that have been used as a foundation for curriculum development and program implementation (Sedlacek, 2004, 2010, 2011; Schwartz & Washington, 2002). Some researchers discovered that AA men are more impacted by what are known as non-cognitive variables. Sedlacek, Webster, and others have validated the use of non-cognitive variables in predicting the persistence of AA college students (Bush, 2010; Sedlacek, 2004, 2010; Schwartz & Washington, 2002; Lanham,
“Since non-cognitive variables have been shown to correlate with the academic success of nontraditional students, the mentor can emphasize the very attributes that relate to desirable protégé outcomes” (Sedlacek, 2011a; Lanham, Schauer, Osho, 2011). Their research also identified three distinct advantages to employing such variables for non-traditional students (Sedlacek, 2004a, 2007, 2011)

1. “The non-cognitive variables are developmental in nature and students can be evaluated on their progress along the dimensions” (Sedlacek, 2007, 2010).

2. “There are methods available to assess each of the non-cognitive variables in several ways (Sedlacek, 2011).

3. “Using non-cognitive variables allows for the training of mentors around a structure that can be practiced and duplicated for many mentors so they are operating in a similar and coordinated manner.” (Sedlacek, 2010).

Non-cognitive variables or (factors) are those that provide motivation, positive self-concept, and endurance as they relate to adjustments and perceptions, rather than the traditional verbal and quantitative assessments (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, 2010). Just as do socioeconomic backgrounds, academic preparedness, and financial assets impact persistence in higher education, social interactions and personal adjustments have just as much an influence on the persistence of AA men in higher education (Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; Sedlacek, 2004; Lanham, Schauer, Osho, 2011; Schmitt, Billington, Keeney, Reeder, Pleskac, Sinha, Zorzie, 2011). Traditionally, students have been measured through the means of standardized and placement testing (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, 2010; Strayhorn, 2008a). However, Sedlacek (2004, 2007) said that AA men are reached by non-cognitive measures that are usually left out of tests.
that only measure verbal and quantitative aptitude. The non-cognitive variables that Sedlacek spoke of focus more on adjustment, motivation, and student perception (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008a). Further, non-cognitive variables have been found to be critical in improving not only academic performance, but also the persistence of AA students (Schwartz & Washington, 2002).

College persistence has been linked to non-cognitive variables for quite some time. In 1980, Brown and Marenco said that institutions should use non-cognitive variables to improve cultural diversity in law school. In 1985, Willingham conducted a similar study that observed a group of high school students and found that non-cognitive variables were an added prediction of college success. Some of the research that has explored student involvement (Cuyjet, 2006; 1997; Harper, 2006, 2005, 2004; Harper & Wolley, 2002; Kimbrough, 2003; McClure, 2006); as well as academic and social integration (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Sedlacek, 2010); study skills (Nisbet, Ruble, & Shurr, 1982); and socioeconomic background, institutional, and environmental factors (Ting & Robinson, 1998) have all drawn upon the use of non-cognitive variables to measure student success. Non-cognitive variables are useful for all students but particularly critical for nontraditional students since standardized tests afford only a limited knowledge of their potential (Lanham, Schauer, Osho, 2011; Schmitt, Billington, Keeney, Reeder, Pleskac, Sinha, Zorzie, 2011; Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, Strayhorn, 2008a). To measure such variables, Sedlacek (2004) identified the eight non-cognitive variables that measure areas often overlooked by many instruments measuring student success amongst AA men. This system that Sedlacek designed is known as the “Sedlacek Model.” At the heart of his model is the belief that non-traditional students should be thought of in a cultural context (Sedlacek, 2004; Strayhorn, 2008a). He argued that while the academic needs of these students
may be different, they had similarities when coping with a traditional system that was not

After more than twenty-five years of research on various issues regarding AAs, Sedlacek,
(2007), and Harper, (2012) found that several things are demonstrated in the traditional system of
assessment. A couple of their findings were that (1) decision makers frequently could not use
standardized test results and (2) test results were usually not tied to outcomes such as grades or
persistence in higher education. Due to the present systems of assessments’ inability to predict
outcomes, Sedlacek identified 8 non-cognitive variables that predict AA male success. He said
these factors aid in the understanding of complexities AA men and women experience, as well as
the prediction of what motivates these students to succeed (Sedlacek, 2004, 2010; Strayhorn,
2008a). The eight variables of success, according to Sedlacek (2004, 2007, and 2010), are
outlined in more detail below.

*Positive Self-Concept*

Positive self-concept is the demonstration of confidence, strength of character,
determination, and independence (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, and 2010). Research showed that AA
students who have positive self-concept not only have better grades, but they stay in college, and
they graduate (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, Schauer, 2007). Additional research said that in order for
AA students to succeed academically at an institution where they are of a different cultural
background than most of the faculty and students, they should have a greater belief in themselves
and their ability to adjust (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005). Research has suggested that
students must be confident in what they can do (Harper, 2012). Without such confidence,
students will have a difficult time matriculating in higher education (Sedlacek, 2004). Sedlacek’s
studies also showed that students with a sense of self, strong character, determination, and
independence, typically have a greater ease in higher education and feel part of the existing system (Sedlacek, 2004).

**Realistic Self-Appraisal**

Sedlacek 2004, 2007, 2010 & Schauer (2007) asserted that a realistic self-appraisal is associated with acknowledging where adjustments need to be made and seeking out the resources to follow through. This variable is displayed through the ability to assess one’s strengths and weaknesses. One thing that can derail a student’s future very quickly is a failure to recognize areas of deficiency (Sedlacek, 1999, 2004, 2007; Stretch, 2005). In a recent study, Sedlacek and Sheu (2008) discovered that realistic self-appraisal correlated with high grades for AA college students. This supported an earlier finding that AA students with realistic self-appraisal stay in school longer and they graduate (Sedlacek 2004).

**Successfully Handling the System (Racism)**

The third factor that Sedlacek (2004, 2007, and 2010) presented referred to students who had experienced some sort of discrimination, and were dedicated to struggling against the systems that opposed their progress. Further, these are individuals who are not submissive to existing wrongs, nor hateful of society, and people who were assertive in their believing the school had a role in fighting existing discrimination (Sedlacek 2004; Stretch, 2005). Other research showed that AA students who attended a PWI were able to negotiate the system at their institutions if they possessed the hope to achieve success in school (Stretch, 2005). Harper (2012) explained in his study, that one of the many ways AA men handle racism is by waiting an extended amount of time to reflect on the racist encounter. Further, he says that many of the AA men he studied became skilled at thoughtfully and calmly questioning their misconceptions (Harper, 2012).
Preference for Long-Term Goals

Goal setting is also a critical skill that is required of all students who aspire to be successful. Sedlacek (2004) said this skill, however, is one that has proven to be a real challenge for some AA students due to their inability to find suitable role models. He said AA students had more of a difficult time adjusting to a campus where they were the minority, making it difficult to state and develop goals (Sedlacek, 2004; Stretch, 2005; Schauer, 2007). Having goals gives students something to strive for in their efforts to persist in higher education.

Availability of Strong Support Person

The next factor of success for AA students is the presence of someone who can be supportive of them. Sedlacek (1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2003a) insisted that students do better in school when they have a strong influence providing advice to them, which is also linked to grade and retention improvement.

Leadership Experience

The sixth factor that leads to success amongst AA students has to do with leadership development. Quite naturally leadership skills in an individual can assist a person in overcoming whatever challenge he or she faces (Sedlacek, 2004; Stretch, 2005; Schauer, 2007). Leadership for AA men can take many forms. Sedlacek (2003 and 2007) expressed a belief that it is vitally important for students to seek out supportive services at their institutions.

Community Involvement

For many AA students, the community is one of the main places where they can receive the support they need (Sedlacek, 2004, 2007, 2010). Not only does becoming involved in the community help students develop leadership skills, but also helps AA men develop positive self-concept through their involvement in groups (Sedlacek, 2004, 2010; Schauer, 2007). Research
indicated that students who were involved in the community were more likely to persist in higher education. (Shivpuri et. al, 2006; Harper, 2010).

Knowledge Acquired in a Field

The final factor comes down to prior experiences in the field of interest for the student. Sedlacek (2010) says that students who obtain hands on experience in their field of study experience additional learning opportunities.

In Sedlacek’s research, he used a questionnaire that measured each of the aforementioned variables. Sedlacek (2004, 2007, 2011) also provided evidence in other research that his non-cognitive questionnaire was able to accurately predict grades, retention, and graduation for non-traditional or AA students.

Identity Negotiation & Leadership Development

Identity Negotiation

In the last 20 years there has been an increasing amount of research on the theory of identity negotiation. One of the more pressing reasons for a lack of AA male persistence in higher education is the inability to negotiate identity (Orbe, 2008). Orbe wrote, “Identities simultaneously revolve around both individual and social aspects of identification. This primary dialectical tension then, reflects the struggle between an individual or personal and social/collective self-concept” (p. 83).

The transition issue that some AA men experience is identified as racial identity, which is a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (Helms, 1990; Alexander, 2011). There are many theorists who have written on racial identity, but for the purpose of this study and determining how racial identity can help AA men persist in higher education, the models developed by Cross
(1971) and Jackson (1976) were used here. Albeit dated research, their findings have been shown to be relevant for AA men in higher education today, which is demonstrated in recent research by Jackson (2006), Hopson & Orbe (2007), and Alexander (2011).

Cross (1971) introduced the Nigrescence model to explain the process he described as “becoming Black.” His theory explained how AAs transform their worldviews from non-Africentrism, to Africentrism, to multiculturalism (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995). His theory also explained the process that AAs navigate to develop their self-concept, and self-esteem (Jackson, 1976). The Nigrescence model can be categorized into five stages of Racial Identity: (1) pre-encounter, (2) encounter, (3) immersion-emersion, (4) internalization, and (5) internalization-commitment (Cross, 1971). Following is an explanation of these stages:

- AAs who identify with White values are described as being in the pre-encounter stage (stage 1). In other words, individuals in this stage seem to have a pro-White identity, and anti-Black view of themselves, which can take the form of self-hating.
- During the encounter stage (stage 2), AAs begin to reexamine their beliefs about race, and tend to question the role of race in America (Cross, 1971).
- In the immersion-emersion stage (stage 3), persons will immerse themselves in everything having to do with the ‘Black’ culture. These individuals will develop a highly pro-Black and anti-White identity. Secondly, they will begin to reevaluate their position and begin to develop a calmer disposition. They will become less extreme and make the transition to the internalization stage of development (Cross, 1971).
- In the internalization phase (stage 4), AAs begin to accept the reality of their being ‘Black’ (Cross, 1971).
• If they become involved in social change and civil rights issues, they enter internalization-commitment (stage 5) (Cross, 1971; Vandiver, 2001).

Later, Cross revised this model to: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization (Cross, 1991).

Identity negotiation is important, especially for AA men on a predominately White campus, because from day to day AAs negotiate their identities to racially adjust to their environments (Orbe, 2003).

In the Black Identity Development model (BID), Jackson (1976) identified the identity progression stages as: (1) passive acceptance, (2) active resistance, and (3) redirection, and internalization. Redirection was later changed to ‘redefinition’ and naïve stage was added as the first stage.

• In the first stage of development (naïve), a child has very little or no conscious social awareness of race.

• It is in the second stage of acceptance that a person begins to learn about and adopt an ideology about their race. During this stage children are “bombarded” with covert and overt messages that lead them to believe ‘Black’ means less than, and White equals superiority (Jackson, 2001). Also, during this stage, the AA begins to internalize the idea of racial dominance and begins to accept his pre-established role in society. A frequent occurrence during the accepting stage is the devaluing of anything that has a ‘Black’ association. Jackson (2001) says that leaving this stage may be difficult to do because the individual would have to acknowledge his own victimization within society.

• Resistance stage represents a painful reality of how racism impacts AA students daily. They develop a negative attitude toward White people and other people of color who
appear to side with White people. The difficulty of this stage, said Jackson (2001) comes from the understanding that if they fully embrace this stage, they may lose the benefits they received prior to this stage. He also said that during resistance, it is important to Blacks that they learn all they can about racism so they can strategically find ways to “stop colluding in their own victimization” (Jackson, 2001).

• In the redefinition stage, AA students began to develop a great sense of pride in their ‘Black’ heritage (Jackson, 2001).

• The final stage of internalization is where persons no longer feel like they have to explain or defend their Black identity. Granted, they may still be very well aware of the environment ignoring, degrading, or attacking all that is Black, but they no longer feel as if they need to protect the ‘Black’ culture (Jackson, 2001).

Understanding black identity is important for professionals and educators in higher education and keeping AA men in college, because through an understanding of the different stages, professionals and educators can find ways to help AA men negotiate their identities and their success (Cross, 1991; Jackson, 2001).

**Leadership Development**

Since 1976, there has been an assertive effort to implement more student leadership programs at colleges across America. It was in 1976 that the American College Student Personnel Association (ACPA) put into place a special task force responsible for seeking opportunities to develop and implement more student leadership programs (Roberts, 1981). This move led to a heightened awareness for the establishment of student leadership programs and the release of the first publication on the subject, Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education (Roberts, 1981). Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1994) described the idea of student
development as a “social movement, and a concerted and organized attempt within the professional field of student affairs to reform the philosophic underpinning of the field and the ways in which professionals conceptualize their work with students on the college campus” (p.1).

Since that time, student development theory has become widely discussed in the field of student affairs and has over the years become more accepted in higher education. This increased interest in student development has therefore led to an ever-growing body of knowledge on the subject (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2000). King and Howard-Hamilton (2000) also categorized student development theories into three distinct groups: psychosocial, cognitive-structural, and typological. Examples of psychosocial theory are identity development, and racial identity development (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990). Psychosocial theory tends to focus on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals at different stages of development. Cognitive-structural theory centers on a process that occurs during the intellectual development (King & Kitchener, 1994). An example of this category is the Reflective Judgment Model, which relies on questions to conclude how individuals utilize reflective thinking (King & Kitchener, 1994). Typological theories place an emphasis on an individual’s preferences he exhibits in specific learning environments (King & Kitchener, 1994).

Dugan and Komives (2007) asserted that student involvement in higher education is vitally important in order for student success to occur. Gray (2011) and Harper (2012) argued that AA students that attend PWIs often struggle with a dual existence and deal with the difficulty that comes from personal marginalization and feelings of exclusion. Given the fact that more AA students attend PWIs than HBCUs (Sutton and Kimbrough, 2001), lack of involvement is an issue worth noting. Further, the experiences of students regarding acculturation with the
dominant culture not only impacts but also places undue psychological and physiological stressors on the student (McDonald, 2011). Sutton and Kimbrough (2001) found that 79% of AA students primarily participate in AA specific groups or groups that have a community service component. Many of the leadership development programs that exist on college campuses today come in the form of student activities, which many AA students tend not to participate in, because they cross cultural lines (Frazier, 2009). Furthermore, leadership activities tend to come with potentially negative effects (Arminio, 2000). Some of these effects include: being perceived as representative for their race, personal costs of time and privacy, and finding that participation in mixed race groups is emotionally exhausting (Arminio, 2000).

*Revolutionary Leadership & Social Responsibility*

Leadership is beginning to be thought of less and less as an individualistic process. More experts are viewing leadership as an inclusive, values based, and collaborative process (HERI, 1996; Kezar & Carducci, 2009; Komives et al., 2005; Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2007). AA students are also believed to view leadership opportunities outwardly as opposed to individualistic (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). Kezar and Carducci (2009) described the increased interest in a communal type of leadership as revolutionary leadership. There are five assumptions that drive this concept: (1) leadership should be viewed as a process instead of individual focused; (2) culture and context tend to drive the understanding of leadership; (3) leadership requires focused collaboration on different levels; (4) participants have mutual power and influence; and (5) there is an emphasis on learning, empowerment, and change. Komives et al. (2007) defined the purpose of leadership this way:

Leadership should attempt to accomplish something or change something. Leadership is purposeful and intentional. On a more profound level, leadership should be practiced in
such a way as to be socially responsible. This kind of social responsibility is involved both in the outcomes or content of the group’s purpose as well as in the group’s process (p. 19).

Therefore, leadership should be more than participating in activities. Leadership should be a process that promotes social responsibility and change. If AA students tend to lean towards groups that focus on community service (Sutton and Kimbrough, 2001), there should subsequently be more leadership development opportunities that provide this type of social responsibility (Komives, 2007).

Introduced nearly two decades ago was the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (SCM) (HERI 1996), which brought the idea of revolutionary leadership into focus. The model was created with a couple of things in mind, including: inclusion of all students regardless of participation in activities and leadership as a means for social change. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development model has been validated through several empirical studies that used the Social Change Model of Leadership (Dugan, 2006a; Dugan 2006b; Dugan, Komives, Segar, 2008).

_Campus Involvement_

Leadership development cannot be achieved without involvement from the student on some level (Roberts & McNeese, 2007). Research suggested that students are much more successful in college when they are involved in the life of the college (Harper, 2012; Roberts & McNeese, 2007). The reality is that AA men tend to view the opportunities available as irrelevant to them (Frazier, 2009; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). These young men find meaning through having others they can interact with. Pascarella and Terenzini (2004) said the level of student involvement and integration in any of the components of an institution’s academic and
social systems can be a critical factor in his persistence decisions. AA students have a need to belong, and when they are involved in the life of the university, an attachment is developed (Brown, 2006). Involvement can be as simple as using a computer lab or hanging out in the game room of the student union (Harper, 2006). In a recent study, Harper (2005) found that students who were involved in campus organizations and had regular contact with other students and faculty developed organizational, decision-making, problem solving, and leadership skills, which ultimately lead to their persistence in school. Therefore, an involvement in campus activities has proven to be fundamental to the persistence of the AA student (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, 2005; Harper & Wholly, 2002). AA male students who are involved while in college are not only more likely to persist, but they are also likely to achieve positive college outcomes and to be successful after college (Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh & Leegwater, 2005). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) argued that “the greater the effort and personal investment a student makes, the greater the likelihood of educational and personal returns on that investment across the spectrum of college student outcomes” (p.648).

**Summary**

The literature identified many possible reasons for the persistence of AA men in higher education. Amongst these reasons are: student involvement, identity negotiation, non-cognitive variables, mentoring and leadership development. These very factors also serve as an indication for why many AA men in higher education do not persist. One of the main reasons AA men do not persist in higher education, is due to a lack of non-cognitive factors that could help AA men work through their barriers (Sedlacek, 2004a; Stretch, 2005; Schauer, 2007). A review of the literature also presented a gap. There is little research pertaining to mentoring as a vehicle for leadership development of AA men.
In Chapter III, the methodological approach is explained. The participant criteria, data analysis, and collection procedures, trustworthiness criteria, limitations, and delimitations of the study are also presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The overarching purpose of this study was to make meaning of the experiences of sixteen AA men who persisted in higher education. Further, this research sought to discover if mentoring served as a vehicle for non-cognitive development, leadership development, and identity negotiation for AA men. The three questions that guided the study were:

1. Does mentoring help initiate non-cognitive variables in AA men in higher education?
2. Does mentoring have an impact on leadership development among AA males enrolled in higher education?
   a. Do mentors’ efforts help equip their protégés to be leaders?
3. Does mentoring have an impact on identity negotiation?
   a. Do mentors help AA men in higher education overcome racial barriers?
   b. Does the mentor relationship impact the way the protégé views himself and the world around him?

Each of the eight non-cognitive variables was measured through the survey, and the interviews provided added context and meaning for their experiences in higher education.

Methodological Approach

This study used a qualitative methodology, which gave opportunity for each AA man to share his experience as a student in a post-secondary educational institution. The goal was to discover how mentoring helped the AA men to persist in higher education and how they felt they were equipped to negotiate their success. One of the benefits of the qualitative method was that it served as a tool to discover how individuals made meaning of their experiences and interacted
socially with their world (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln defined qualitative research (2005) as,

Situated activity that locates the observed in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (p. 3).

Further, the qualitative research was emergent, which gave opportunity for change in the data collection process (Creswell, 2003). Using the phenomenological approach gave understanding of each man’s experience and what ultimately led to his success. Phenomenological design simply refers to the study of how people describe things and experiences through their own senses (Husserl, 1913 as cited in Patton, 2001). Also used in this study is a descriptive method, which is the use of surveys, questionnaires, and/or interviews for the purpose of obtaining necessary data. It was said that qualitative researchers tend to “look at their own lives to see if they can find anything interesting to study, an unusual angle, or puzzling event, or phenomenon” (Esterberg, 2002, p.26).

Each of the participants of this study had a mentor at various stages of their lives. “Effective qualitative inquiry required that the researcher be familiar not only with qualitative research methods but also with the phenomenon under study” (Crowson, as cited in Whitt, 1991, p. 408).

**Theoretical Assumptions**

One of the goals of this study was to gain insight from the success of AA men who graduated from college and to make meaning of their experiences. Crotty (1998) identified
constructionism as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interactions between human beings in their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). One of the qualities of the constructionist paradigm is that reality is not easily quantifiable, but rather multiple and complex (Broido & Manning, 2002). Conducting the interviews was therefore necessary for the study to understand and appreciate the unique journey of each individual experiencing the phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). The constructionist paradigm is beginning to become more and more accepted in higher education and student affairs practices (Broido & Manning, 2002).

Research Approach

By drawing from phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, this research observed the following: (1) how the men interpreted their experiences, (2) how they constructed their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attributed to their experiences (Merriam & Associates, 2002). In order for an understanding to take place, meaning must be mediated through the researcher as an instrument (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Through this approach, the goal was to discover the factors that set these men apart from their unsuccessful counterparts, and the similarities in their development as leaders.

Phenomenological Perspective

The sole purpose of the phenomenological approach was to understand the perspectives of those being studied and their lived experiences (Merriam & Associates, 2002). This research intended to gain insight into what leads to the persistency of AA males in institutions of higher education. Phenomenological studies do not make assumptions but rather approach the subject as ‘freshly’ and neutral as possible (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) also says that in such an
investigation, “the researcher becomes an expert on the topic, knows the nature of prior research, has developed new knowledge on the topic, and has become proficient enough in recognizing the kind of future research that would deepen and extend knowledge on the topic” (p. 162).

**Participants**

For the study, a criterion method of sampling was used. This mode of sampling requires that each of the participants in the study meet prescribed criteria for the study and have experienced the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, participants were selected based upon the specific qualities they could bring to the study (Esterberg, 2002, p. 93). Not only was criterion sampling used in this study, but variation sampling was also used by requiring participants to have experienced the phenomenon, “which involves the intentional selection of students whose experience, when analyzed in the aggregate, provides the fullest description of the experienced phenomenon,” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 653).

The participants for this study, therefore, were required to meet the following criteria: (1) have successfully completed a four year degree from an accredited university; (2) have identified themselves as AA and/or Black, non-Hispanic; and (3) have engaged in a formal or informal mentoring relationship while in college (as defined by the definition for mentor). Also, to achieve more effective sampling, participants spanned in geographic location from the Southwest region of the U.S. to the Mid-East region to the Northeast. Further, each participant was required to work in a full time career profession at the time of the interviews. To protect each participant’s identity, the research refers to them as P, and a number of one through sixteen.

**Data Collection Procedures**
A non-cognitive questionnaire and series of interviews were used to collect data for this study. To achieve this end, the process included a series of interviews that ultimately allowed for making meaning of the participants’ experiences in college.

Non-Cognitive Questionnaire

Prior to being interviewed, each participant was required to complete a thirty-six question online assessment that was developed by Sedlacek (2004), and is presented in his book “Beyond the Big Test.” There were originally forty questions, but four of them were questions about the participants that were already known. This questionnaire was categorized based upon the eight non-cognitive factors that are being used as an evaluative measure for this study. Those factors are: (1) positive self-concept; (2) realistic self-appraisal; (3) understands and deals with racism; (4) preference for long range goals; (5) availability of a strong support person (mentor); (6) successful leadership experience; (7) demonstrated community service; (8) knowledge acquired in a field. Permission from the author to use past tense verbiage in the survey was granted, due to the fact that all participants were college graduates.

Interviews

“An interview is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic” (Esterberg, 2002, P. 83).

This method of collecting data is in line with the goal of a phenomenological study. Among the three types of interviews (semi-structured, unstructured, and structured), the use of semi-structured interviews proved to be the most appropriate to allow the participants to be candid in their responses, and for “listening carefully to the participant’s response and following their lead” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 87). Also used was a three-interview approach as provided by
Dolbeare & Schuman (1982) (as cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 17). The three interviews were specific in focus and were intended to achieve specific results. Frazier effectively used this interview approach (2006) in his research on AA men who served in majority White student groups. Seidman (2006) offered a description of this three-interview series:

1. “Interview One: Focused Life History – In the first interview, the interviewer’s task is to put the participant’s experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about himself or herself in light of the topic up to the present time” (p. 17).

2. “Interview Two: The Details of the Experience – The purpose of the second interview is to concentrate on the concrete details of the participants’ present lived experience in the topic area of the study” (p. 18).

3. “Interview Three: Reflection on the Meaning – In the third interview, we ask participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience” (p. 18).

Therefore using this format, the research yielded pertinent information about each participant that would help: learn about his life’s history (interview one); gather information about his specific experiences (interview two); and reflect on how he made meaning of those experiences (interview three). Conducting 3 separate interviews allowed for each participant to maintain a clear focus of the topic being discussed. Multiple interviews also allowed for the interviewer to build trust and to build upon what was learned in each previous interview.

Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes in length, depending on the responses of the participants. Due to the various geographical locations of each of the participants, it was necessary to conduct all of the interviews via conference call. Go to meeting software was used to record each interview. Each participant was provided a phone number and pin number to call.

Phenomenological Interviewing
It was important in this research to conduct interviews that were phenomenological in nature. The purpose of this type of interview is to “gain access to the meaning an individual makes of his or her own experience” (p.63).

Kvale as cited in Attinasi, 1992 spoke about interviewing and mentioned six possible phases:

(1) The interviewee describes his or her life-world with respect to the phenomenon of interest. (2) The interviewee discovers new relations, sees new meaning in his or her life-world on the basis of the spontaneous descriptions. (3) The interviewer during the interview condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes and, perhaps, sends the interpreted meaning back for confirmation or clarification. (4) The interviewer or another person alone interprets the completed and transcribed interview on three different levels: (a) the self understanding of the interviewee; (b) a common sense interpretation that involved extending the meaning of what the interviewee said by reading between the lines and by drawing in broader contexts than the interviewee did; and (c) more theoretical interpretations, based on, for example an existing social or sociopsychological theory. (5) The interviewer gives the interpretations, based on his or her analysis of the completed interview, back to the interviewee in a second interview. (6) There may be an extension of the description-interpretation continuum to action. (p. 63)

Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on a qualitative and phenomenological perspective, which takes into account the perception, emotion, and desire (Patton, 2002). Qualitative data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass collected data” (Marshall &
Rossom, 1995, p. 111). Organizing the data was an important aspect of this process. Moustakas (1994) speaks about this method of collecting data, presenting the following steps:

1. Obtain a full description of your own experience using a phenomenological approach;
2. From the transcript of your experience: (a) consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience; (b) Record all relevant statements; (c) List each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statement. These are invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience; (d) Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes; (e) synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes in a description of the textures of the experience. Include verbatim examples; (g) Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of your experience.
3. From the verbatim transcript of the experience of each of the other co-researchers, complete the above steps through g.
4. From the individual textural-structural descriptions of all co-researchers’ experiences, construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experiences, integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole. (p. 122)

The research and data collected from each of the participants was organized and coded. Through the use of these methods the goal was to find the following qualities in each participant. From Sedlacek (2004):

2. **Realistic Self – Appraisal** – Recognizes and accepts any strengths and deficiencies, especially academic, and works hard at self-development; recognizes need to broaden his individuality.

3. **Successfully handling the system (Racism)** – Exhibits a realistic view of the system on the basis of personal experience of racism; committed to improving the existing system; takes an assertive approach to dealing with existing wrongs but is not hostile to society and is no “cop-out”; able to handle racist system.

4. **Preference for Long-Term Goals** – Able to respond to deferred gratification; plans ahead and sets goals.

5. **Availability of Strong Support Person** – Seeks and takes advantage of a strong support network or has someone to turn to in a crisis or for encouragement.

6. **Leadership Experience** – Demonstrates strong leadership in any area of his or her background.

7. **Community Involvement** – Participates and is involved in his or her community.

8. **Knowledge Acquired in a Field** – Acquires knowledge in a sustained or culturally related way in any field.

“A research study usually produces a mass of raw data, such as the response of participants to a [questionnaire], achievement, ability, interest, or aptitude test. Collected data must be accurately scored and systematically organized to facilitate data analysis” (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 410). Gathering and analyzing data was critical to this research and understanding of what helps AA men persist in college. Through this process of inductive data analysis, these units resulted in themes that lead to interpretations and findings (Whitt, 1991).

**Legitimacy**
In conducting this research, one of the driving forces that had to constantly be taken into account was the legitimacy factor. This study needed to be one of trustworthiness. Issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were all vitally important to this study.

Credibility

One of the areas where the research sought to achieve such credibility was through the interview process. No information was put into this study without first receiving confirmation from the participants regarding accuracy of interpretation. Maxwell (2000) calls this “member checking,” the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what the participants said. Such member checking was performed following each interview.

Dependability

Dependability was addressed. Dependability is defined as “attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study, as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 145).

Confirmability

Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) can be achieved through audit or audit trail. A drop box account was created for the purpose of collecting and storing all data received such as interview data, digital recordings, voice transcription software notes, and reflective thoughts.

Limitations

The limitation of this study was finding AA men who fit the criteria of the research.
Summary

The purpose of this study was to discover and understand persistency among AA males in institutions of higher education. A further purpose was to determine if mentoring impacted their persistence and achievement. Through a process of surveying, interviewing, and analyzing the data, the following research questions were explored:

1. Does mentoring help initiate non-cognitive variables in AA men in higher education?
2. Does mentoring have an impact on leadership development among AA males enrolled in higher education?
   a. Do mentors’ efforts help equip their protégés to be leaders?
3. Does mentoring have an impact on identity negotiation?
   a. Do mentors help AA men in higher education overcome racial barriers?
   b. Does the mentor relationship impact the way the protégé views himself and the world around him?

Chapter 4 focuses on the lived experiences of AA men who with the support of mentors persisted in higher education.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the lives and experiences of sixteen AA men who persisted in higher education. The findings of the study identified non-cognitive variables that were perceived to have contributed to their persistence in higher education. This chapter also provides emergent themes that derived from the study. This study sought to answer three research questions: 1. Does mentoring help initiate non-cognitive variables in AA men in higher education? 2. Does mentoring have an impact on leadership development among AA males enrolled in higher education? and 3. Does mentoring have an impact on identity negotiation?

To answer these questions, data were collected in several stages and in multiple forms. The first form was a validated survey by Sedlacek (2007), which targeted the impact of non-cognitive variables on the persistence of AA men in higher education. The survey involved both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The major source of data, however, derived out of in-depth one-on-one interviews. Follow up or clarifying questions were used when necessary in order to allow the participants to answer freely when the question propelled them to do so. As for the stages, a validated 3-interview process was used to gain a more holistic view of each of the participant's experiences in higher education.

In answering the research questions, the study affirmed the presence of the eight non-cognitive variables that led to the persistence of the participating AA men in higher education. The variables present were: Positive Self-Concept, Realistic Self-Appraisal, Successfully handling the system, Preference for long-term goals, Availability of a strong support person,
Community involvement, and Knowledge acquired in a field. This data in this chapter will first present the results regarding the non-cognitive variables displayed by the participants. Complete survey and interview questions are listed in Appendixes C and D.

**Interview Participants**

This study on AA men in higher education focused on sixteen interview participants. Each participant had graduated from a four-year institution within the last 15 years. They all identified as AA and attested to having at least one formal or informal mentor during their time in higher education. The participants represented 8 different industries, 10 different states, and 4 different regions of the country. Due to the various locations, interviews were conducted by telephone.

**Non-Cognitive Variables**

According to Sedlacek (2007, 2010) and Ramsey (2008), non-traditional students such as AA men in higher education are more influenced by non-cognitive variables than they are cognitive variables. The survey was geared towards determining if each participant exhibited strength in the non-cognitive areas. Each participant’s responses either affirmed or negated the existence of non-cognitive variables in the AA men who persisted in higher education. Below are sample statements that measure a person’s capacity in each of the eight non-cognitive variables.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable measured</th>
<th>Sample Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive self-concept or confidence</td>
<td>I want a chance to prove myself academically. If tutoring is available at no cost, I will attend regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic self-appraisal</td>
<td>I expect to have a harder time than most. I am as skilled academically as the average student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands and deals with racism</td>
<td>I expect I will encounter racism in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers long-range goals to short-term or immediate needs</td>
<td>Once I start something, I finish it. When I believe strongly in something, I act on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of strong support person</td>
<td>My family always wanted me to go to college. If I run into problems concerning school, I have someone who would listen to me and help me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful leadership experience</td>
<td>I am sometimes looked up to by others. In groups where I am comfortable, I am often looked to as a leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>I am actively involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge acquired in a field</td>
<td>I have three goals for myself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (and Sedlacek 1988) & (Ramsey, 2008)

Following are the descriptions and results for the eight non-cognitive variables found by Sedlacek (2007).
**Variable Item #1: POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT**

*This variable assesses the protégé’s confidence, self-esteem, independence, and determination, all vital components of future achievement and success.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé feel confident of making it through graduation?</td>
<td>Did the protégé express any reason he might not complete school or succeed and attain his goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé make positive statements about himself?</td>
<td>Did the protégé express concerns that other students were better than he was?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé expect to achieve his goals and perform well in academic and non-academic areas?</td>
<td>Did the protégé expect to have marginal grades?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé provide evidence how he felt he would attain his goals?</td>
<td>Did the protégé have trouble balancing his personal and academic life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé link his interests and experiences with his goals?</td>
<td>Did the protégé appear to avoid new challenges or situations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé assume he could handle new situations or challenges?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were several survey questions and multiple-choice statements geared towards learning how each of the participants fared in the area positive self-concept. The corresponding questions were:

1. How much education did you expect to get during your lifetime?
2. About 50% of college students typically leave before finishing a program. If this had happened to you, what would have most likely been the cause?
3. I wanted a chance to prove myself academically.
Not only did eighty percent of the participants express an expectation that they would obtain at least a Masters degree, fifty percent of them were confident they would achieve as high as a Doctorate degree. Further, sixty-five percent of the participants were certain they would not leave college for any reason and ninety-five percent of the participants surveyed stated a desire to prove themselves academically. Another measure of Positive Self-Concept according to Sedlacek (2010), was the presence of positive goals. Several of the participants also verbalized their goals during the interviews:

Participant 08 (P08) The goal that I had at X College was the same goal I had in my Freshman year of High School. I wanted to graduate top of my class. Because I grew up with a competition mindset, I always have to be the best no matter what I am doing.

(P01) Career wise, I had planned on becoming a psychologist. So, I had done some research on what that would involve. I knew it would involve going to graduate school and getting a doctorate.
(P11) I expected that this was going to be the ultimate stepping-stone or the ultimate key, I guess, to really open my life in terms of a professional career. I expected to come here, put in my time, get out, and have a world of opportunity available because of what I was about to learn. One of the reasons I chose X School was because the engineering program was ranked pretty high on a state level and a national level.

Variable #2: REALISTIC SELF-APPRASIAL

*This variable assesses the protégé’s ability to recognize and accept his strengths and deficiencies, especially in academics, and works hard at self-development to broaden his individuality.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé aware of his strengths and weaknesses?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of how evaluations were done in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé know what it took to pursue a given career?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unsure about his own abilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé realistic about his abilities?</td>
<td>Was the protégé uncertain about how his peers or superiors rated his performances?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show an awareness of how his service, leadership, extracurricular activities, or schoolwork has caused him to change over time?</td>
<td>Did the protégé overreact to positive or negative reinforcement rather than seeing it in a larger context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the protégé learned something from these structured or unstructured activities?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of how he was doing in his classes prior to grades being posted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé appreciate and understand both positive and negative feedback?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of positive and negative consequences of his grades, actions, or skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé provide evidence of overcoming anger, shyness, and lack of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample statements that demonstrate realistic self-appraisal according to Ramsey (2008) are: I expect to have a harder time than most, and I believe I am as skilled academically as the average student. Sixty percent of the participants expressed a belief that they were as skilled as the average student, and seventy percent said they expected to have a tougher time than most other students.
Variable #3: SUCCESSFULLY HANDLES THE SYSTEM (RACISM)

This variable assesses the protégé’s ability to understand the role of the ‘system’ in life and to develop a method of assessing the cultural/racial demands of the system and respond accordingly/assertively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé able to overcome challenges or obstacles he was confronted with as a result of racism in a positive and effective way?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of how the “system” works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé understand the role of the “system” in his/her life and how it treats nontraditional persons?</td>
<td>Was the protégé preoccupied with racism or did not feel racism existed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé reveal ways that he/she has learned to “deal” with the “system” accordingly?</td>
<td>Did the protégé blame others for his/her problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the protégé react with the same intensity to large or small issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Was the protégé’s method for successfully handling racism that did not interfere with personal and academic development nonexistent?

When asked to respond to the statement, “I expected to encounter racism at the school,” the results were more mixed. Fifty-five percent of the participants agreed, while twenty-five percent were neutral, and twenty percent disagreed.

Dealing with and navigating “the system” was something that several of the participants mentioned in their interviews. One of the indicators of an AA student dealing with racism or the
system, as Sedlacek (2007) calls it is their ability to “reveal ways they were able to learn how to deal with the system.” When asked how High School prepared him for college, (P15) provided insight on how he was able to deal with being the only AA student in many of his courses:

I never had a problem with any of my teachers. I had a few run-ins with a couple, but for the most part they liked me. Because they liked me, sometimes they challenged me or they put me in a position to succeed. By doing that, they kind of put me in a position where I could learn skills that would take me further in college – just little things like sitting in front of the classroom or encouraging me to take classes. For instance, my senior year in high school I had my schedule set up so that I could take all easy classes. I remember getting called down to the office so they could persuade me to take on an AP bio course. Science and math weren’t my strong suits, but they still encouraged me to do it. I went back and forth trying not to do it, but they finally won, and I took an AP bio course, which ended up being big for me. It was good for me, and it kind of put me in a position where I was the only black kid in the class at the time. When I got to college, it looked very much the same way. There were a lot classes that I had where I was the only black kid in the class. It kind of alleviated that shock. It wasn’t the first time I had been the only black kid in a class, but it kind of reminded me that for a college-level course, it’s not going to be a cake-walk class. A ‘no cake-walk’ class combined with not having anybody who looks like you sometimes can be very alienating. Just doing little stuff like that prepared me for college.

Several other students also discussed how they learned to deal with, and overcome challenges they were experiencing as students.
(P4) I think that one of the ways I overcame the whole process of dealing with everything, was that I made sure to always find somebody who I trusted and who I thought wouldn’t steer me the wrong way. So if I got a good vibe about them and they had a history of helping a lot of people of color and all that, I made sure to ask questions and figure out ‘how do I do this?’ I was still learning on the go; however, they were able to walk me through some steps…. Often times I think that helps (having a black mentor), but sometimes it’s the person who doesn’t look like you who ends up helping you. So I just made sure to find somebody who I thought had my best interest at heart, and that kind of helped guide me through the process.

(P5) I had some really good mentors on campus. I mentioned one by name previously who was just excellent at stuff like that. Sometimes he would see me around campus and would say “(P5), how you doing today?” and I’ll say “uh, doing great,” like I always did. But he just had to look at me onceover and go, “Naw, you aren’t doing great.” ‘Are you having problems with this?’ and I’d be like, ‘how’d you know that?’ ‘Well, cuz I went through this as well. He had that ability. So I was blessed in that regard, to have people like that and others who were able to identify issues that I would have. Being from X city, I had extended family outside of the campus, not just my real family, but just everybody in the community who knew that, ‘okay, he’s in college; so we need to take care of him. People would come to me saying ‘I got this job, or I got that job.’ I really have been blessed along the way in these regards, having people that looked after me and took care of me. So those are some of the challenges, and that’s how I handled them. I was blessed; I had people helping me.
The support of my family was very helpful, and having their encouragement to overcome and to get through some things. One thing I realized big time from me being out there by myself, and all those different challenges, is that I really had to tap into my faith big time. Many times I could call my family on the phone and they just couldn’t understand. They couldn’t feel where I was coming from. I couldn’t even talk to my teammates sometimes, and yeah they helped me through a little bit, but sometimes I had to leave them too. Sometimes it was just me in the room, you know? So really tapping into my faith helped me across the board for all of the challenges I faced. So family and teammates, they helped me out. Then, there were people on campus who really took a vested interest in me and saw something in me that even I couldn’t see myself, and they tried to make sure they did everything possible to make sure I was comfortable and make sure I lived up to who they saw that I was capable of being.

(P3) stated it rather clearly: I expected to encounter racism at that school. As a child I was always taught to watch out for racism but not to allow it to discourage me. The city I grew up in is historically segregated and partially racist. I experienced racism as a kid especially during sporting competitions.
Variable #4: PREFERENCE FOR LONG-TERM GOALS

*This variable assesses the protégé’s persistence, patience, long term planning, and willingness to defer gratification and success in college.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé reveal experience setting both academic and personal long-term goals?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack evidence of setting and accomplishing goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the protégé provide evidence that he/she is planning for the future?</td>
<td>Is the protégé likely to proceed without clear direction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the protégé determined a course of study and anticipate the type of career or path he/she might or could pursue?</td>
<td>Does the protégé rely on others to determine outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the protégé aware of realistic and intermediate steps necessary to achieve goals?</td>
<td>Does the protégé focus too much attention to the present?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the protégé participated in activities (volunteer work, employment, extra courses, community work) related to his/her anticipated career goal?</td>
<td>Is the protégé’s plan for approaching a course, school in general, an activity, etc. nonexistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the protégé states his/her goals, are the goals vague or unrealistic?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One example of variable 4 in action is the ability to stick to a goal and see things out (Ramsey, 2008; Sedlacek, 2007) One of the survey questions asked the participants about their preference for long-term goals and seeing things to completion. Ninety-five percent of the participants expressed an orientation towards long-term goals.
(P1) is a perfect example of having a long-term career plan and seeing it through unto completion. When asked about one of his goals prior to college, he gave the following response:

Career-wise, I had planned on becoming a psychologist. So I had done some research on what that would involve. I knew therefore, that would involve me going to graduate school and getting a doctorate. Even early on, before I started college, I knew that it would be a long journey to get to the career path that I wanted to, which was to become a psychologist.

(P3) Once I started something, I finished it. That is something I was raised to do.
Variable #5: AVAILABILITY OF STRONG SUPPORT PERSON
This variable assesses the protégé’s availability of a strong support network, help, and encouragement, and the degree to which he/she relies solely on her/his own resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé have a strong support system?  (This can be a personal, professional, academic support as long as it is someone the protégé can turn to for advice, consultation, assistance, encouragement etc.)</td>
<td>Did the protégé avoid turning to a support person, mentor, or close advisors for help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé willing to admit that he needed help and able to pull on other resources, other than himself, to solve problems?</td>
<td>Did the protégé keep his problems to himself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the protégé state that he can handle things on his own?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the protégé state that access to a previous support person may have been reduced or eliminated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the protégé unaware of the importance of a support person?</td>
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</table>

Two of the survey statements that measured variable five were:

1. My friends and relatives did not feel I should have gone to college.
2. I sometimes needed help from others.
My friends and relatives did not feel I should have gone to college.

I sometimes needed help from others
**Variable #6: LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

*This variable assesses the protégé’s skills developed or influence exercised from his/her formal and informal leadership roles.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé take leadership initiative, for example by founding clubs/organizations? What evidence was there?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unable to turn to others for advice or direction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé describe the skills he developed as a leader, skills such as assertiveness, effectiveness, organizing, and time management?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack confidence or leadership skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show evidence of influencing others and being a good role model?</td>
<td>Was the protégé passive or did he lack initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé comfortable providing advice and direction to others?</td>
<td>Was the protégé overly cautious?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé describe a commitment to being a role model for siblings, community members, or schoolmates?</td>
<td>Did the protégé avoid controversy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show sustained commitment to one or two types of organizations with increasing involvement, skill development and responsibility?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé take action and initiative?</td>
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Several statements in both the survey and interview measured leadership experience. A couple of the survey statements that inquired about leadership capacity were:

1. My friends looked to me to make decisions.

2. I was not good at getting others to go along with me.

Only fifteen percent of the participants did not view themselves as a person their peers looked to for decisions, and seventy-five percent of them were good at influencing others.
My friends looked at me to make decisions.

I was not good at getting others to go along with me.
The results of the survey data were also supported by findings from the interviews. Each of the participants was asked to compare how he viewed himself as a leader following High School versus how he viewed himself following college.

(P1) Coming out of HS, I saw myself as being a very strong leader who was able to motivate and influence others. It was kind of like a big fish in a small pond effect. After OSU, it was a wake up call because of enormous size of the college. Having experiencing that, I felt more validated in leadership. I think I had a more tempered belief in my leadership abilities. After graduating from Grad school, the beliefs were similar in terms of leadership in the real world, but I had a better sense of what it takes to be a leader.

(P2) The leadership looked different. I saw myself as a leader in both of those roles, but it looked different. What I mean by that is as a high school graduate, I knew I was a leader. I was engaged with my school, I held leadership roles, I graduated at the top of my class, everybody knew me as such. There was a different sense of leadership. I sat on the stage, and I addressed my senior class and the audience, almost to the point of a standing ovation at graduation; so I knew I was a leader moving forward into my community. So going to college, I had that mentality, but I didn’t implement it well my first couple of semesters. However, when I did graduate, I realized that I was engaged with the university, I don’t think as well as I could have but I think I did a better job towards my latter years than I did my first couple. However, my leadership just looked different. I was a leader in the world, to a degree, because here I am, a black male who graduated from a four-year institution, and that was almost like an exception to the rule, given my childhood and background and the things that I had to overcome and achieve. I was almost an exception. I wasn’t the norm, and I was a leader for my family because now I
was an example. I was the first black male in my family to graduate with a degree. So now I am an example to my younger cousins, my siblings, and everyone else after me that if I can do it, they can do it, especially given my background and not having my dad in the house. Like I said, we bounced around, my brothers and I, from family member to family member. As a graduate, I was a leader to the city of Columbus, and my family. When I graduated from college, it was my now wife and I, and our first child was on the way, who was born like a month and a half after I graduated. I remember thinking, now I have to be a leader to my personal family, not just the family that I was born into, but the family that I helped create. I saw myself as a leader definitely, it just looked different when I graduated from high school versus when I graduated from college.

(P5) I think going into college it was very strategic. I think in getting involved and becoming a leader on campus, it was easier to do. So I was probably more comfortable coming out of high school than I was coming out of college as far as doing it now. I didn’t have an issue at all my first year with trying to become a leader and understanding what it took. Graduating college, I had the blueprint from being president of Alpha Phi Alpha and some other organizations definitely. But I thought the world was a lot bigger. I was comfortable at the campus because I had lived on that campus a couple of summers prior to enrolling. So I knew quite a few college students, especially African American college students, already. I was very comfortable going into college. Going into the so-called ‘real world’, I was probably more afraid but yet more equipped to be a leader.

(P9) In High School I saw myself as popular and a person who had influence because a lot of people knew me. At the University, I felt I had matured and my leadership abilities were more internal than they were external.
Graduating high school, I think my leadership was more so … not really a surface level of thinking, but it was more so tied to being liked in high school. It was more so tied to the fact that I was liked and loved by a lot of people. I thought I was a leader. I did have some influence. I did have some pull. I did do quite a bit, more than the average student, and not just black people. I did more than the average student in high school, and I was recognized for it by the school; and I was awarded for it. But I think it was more so tied to me having influence or being liked. It wasn’t necessarily tied to having the title of it and having certain experiences that gave it to me. Out of college, I think the depth and reasoning of what makes a leader grew deeper for me, and I was a lot more hesitant to give myself that title as a leader, because things changed. I learned a lot more about myself. I learned a lot more about life. I learned a lot more about what a real leader is, or what I deemed to be a real leader. I think I kind of had a stronger sense of the responsibility of a leader, and I was a lot more hesitant to automatically jump into the fire and take leadership positions. When I did, my leadership was more so tied to a bigger picture issue. It was tied to reality, it was tied to a certain cause, a certain group, and even a certain demographic. So it was less universal I guess. I think it was more honed and more specific as I got older, and a little bit more targeted for certain groups and demographics.
Variables #7: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This variable assesses the protégé’s identification with a cultural, geographic, or racial group and his/her demonstrated activity within that community grouping.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show sustained commitment to a service site or issue area?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack involvement in cultural, racial or geographical group or community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé demonstrate a specific or long-term commitment or relationships with a community?</td>
<td>Was the protégé involved in his/her community in name only?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé accomplished specific goals in a community setting?</td>
<td>Did the protégé engage more in solitary rather than group activities (academic or non-academic)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé’s community service relate to career or personal goals?</td>
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</table>

The seventh non-cognitive variable is getting involved in community service projects.

The research found that more than eighty percent of the participants were highly involved in
community type activities not only in college, but in High School also.

When asked specifically about their level of involvement in the community, several participants described in length the many things they did to give back to their communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable #8: KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED IN A FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This variable assesses the protégé’s experiences gained in a field through study and experiences beyond the classroom. This variable pays particular attention to the ways the protégé gains non-traditional, perhaps culturally or racially based views of the field.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé use his/her knowledge to teach others about the topic?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack evidence of learning from the community or non-academic activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé working independently in his/her field? (Be sensitive to variations between academic fields and the experiences that can be gained. For example, if in the sciences, by doing independent research, or if in the arts or crafts, by participating in competitions or compositions.)</td>
<td>Was the protégé traditional in his/her approach to learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of his/her possibilities in a field of interest?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P15) I was involved in Project Alpha, so I mentored young men in the program for some time, or I advised them in the program for some amount of time. I did our go to high school/go to college, which we did through Minnesota. It’s called our ACT/SAT Project, where we tutor inner city high school kids for 10 Saturdays throughout the year. It’s free ACT/SAT prep. I did that. I’m also a young adult leader for my church, so I work with kids, and I do small leadership discussions. Those are the big things I do as of late. Every
now and then I’ll go to a soup kitchen or feed the homeless. I did work at the homeless shelter for free for a little bit and I interned there.

(P13) I used to volunteer for the YMCA’s Black Achiever’s Program. That was very much a college readiness program for high school students at one of the high schools out here. That was a once-a-week meeting, where I would go out and interact with them around different sessions. Some of them were similar to some of the other things that I mentioned, but really more about scholarships and applying for schools, succeeding in school, so on and so forth.

(P11) We did several drives and fundraisers with my fraternity. Annually we always did a community picnic, and we would donate to several different colleges. We did a bonfire for one of the girls at the school whose father had some kind of serious illness. We did scholarships, obviously. We also linked up with elementary schools. I don’t know if it was just like Big Brothers, Big Sisters, but it was a very similar set up. We did physical labor-type service; we went out doing yards, and helping the elderly. Of course we had the national programs we did every year and through other organizations as well. Our Gospel Choir always did stuff through music and songs in the community.

(P8) X College has a great connection to the community, and so naturally they do Habitat for Humanity, Relay for Life, and a lot of the more typical more prominent community outreach activities – I participated in those. Also, our fraternity did a lot of things, whether it was cleaning up our community, whether it was stuff on campus or nearby, such as tutoring. Those were some of the activities that we participated in as a fraternity. Outside of the fraternity, I was able to participate in other community service
opportunities, be it individually or through some other organizations that I was involved in.

**Research Questions**

1. **Does mentoring help initiate non-cognitive variables in AA men in higher education?**

To gain insight into the mentor/protégé relationship, the research pulled from both the survey and the interviews to best understand the impact that mentoring had in regard to facilitating the non-cognitive variables. Based on the participants’ responses to the survey questions, it is clear that many of the non-cognitive variables were present prior to their enrolling in higher education. Therefore, understanding the impact of mentoring on the development of non-cognitive variables requires a look into the early years as well as the collegiate years of the participants.

The research found that each of the participants shared what they described as important individuals in regard to who they had become. Two of the interview questions provided insight into the first research question: What differentiated your path from your peers? And, who were some of your biggest influences growing up?

*What differentiated your path from your peers?*

(P1) I am a big believer in nurture and in nature, so I definitely have to give my parents a lot of credit for that. Both of my parents were very hard workers, and they instilled the value of hard work in me. In our household, working hard and doing well in school was just an expectation. My mom is from Florida, just across the border of Georgia. Therefore her perspective growing up was that a southern black education was the way to make it out. So, she definitely instilled that in me. Even though my dad did not go to college, I think he realized the importance of that, and he sensed that from her. So, he
reinforced those principles, even though he, himself, did not experience it. I think just the home environment, the expectation was that way. Also, I think it’s psychologically how I’m made up. I like challenges. I like to be challenged, overcome obstacles, things like that. I think it is a combination of those 2 things.

*Who were some of your biggest influences growing up?*

Definitely my parents. I’d say my mom and dad, first of all, were probably the biggest influences. Even if you look at my career trajectory and my decision to study Human Resources kind of was an outgrowth of my mom’s work and career in Social Work. So, there is a little bit of that dynamic. In terms of the value of working hard, like I said, my dad has always been a very, very hard worker, so he instilled that in me and instilled the importance of education. Those are kind of the early influencers and most consistent influencers in my life. Beyond my parents, I would say certain teachers, especially my English teachers. I always like English as a subject. They instilled the value of being precise and following certain rules and standards as applied to grammar, so when you think about sort of the work that I do today and what it takes to do that work well, a lot of those principles I find myself utilizing. Even though it is not exactly an English or grammar context, thinking about things in that way was a strong influence for me. So, I see myself applying my thought processes to my work that way. I would say some of my English teachers along the way were strong influencers.

One participant also shed light on what differentiated the paths of him and his friends and other black males he grew up with:

(P5) I’ll speak to me first. It’s weird. I never once remember wondering if I would ever go to college. I don’t remember the revelation in 8th or 9th, or 2nd grade even, when I
said “Oooh, I’mma go to college.” It was just something that I was gonna do. It’s like, when you’re in 5th grade, you go into 6th grade next year. So, it never dawned on me until years later, and I don’t know if it has yet, how significant that attitude was – that I didn’t look at college as something to go to as in, “man, should I go to college next year?” It was just the next step. It was never a question whether I would go to college or not, never a question. So I can’t take credit for that. It has to be my mother, who did not have a college degree. She did not go to college, but I guess she just made it sort of second nature that I would. I know that one of my friends’ grandmothers has a couple of degrees and his mother also had a couple of degrees. I know that for them, they stressed education. It was just the next step, you know? So I never looked at it like an impediment or a roadblock. It was just the next step that had to be achieved. If I had to say what separated all of us, I would assume that it’s the same thing that it was with me, our mothers. In 3 of the 4 occasions we were raised by single women, so I would have to give credit to them. It was our mothers; that’s it.

Who were some of your biggest influences growing up?

(P5) That’s a tough question. I always have to say my mother, just because she influenced my personality as far as being tenacious and making sure I didn’t settle, and to always strive for what I wanted. I’ll mention a gentleman in our community who was the head of the NAACP. He was a big influence in pushing us in to go to college, and talking about college. He was a Kappa, so he talked about college in ways (like I said, my dad wasn’t around) that I hadn’t heard about. I wouldn’t have had exposure to it. My cousin, Maurice, who is about 5 or 6 years older who was going through college, pledging Alpha,
doing some of those things, we would talk about. So they were probably the biggest influences really in my childhood other than my friends.

Another example of familial and mentor type support is provided with (P7) who spoke about the impact that several of his teachers had on his development.

(P7) Some of my teachers that I had through high school, they were more than just your regular classroom teachers. They impacted me to do things and encouraged me to do better when I just did average. They knew that I could do better, so they set high standards for me all the time. A couple of teachers I had, one, she started out being my second-grade teacher, and then as I went to middle school, she became a middle school teacher. I would stay after school sometimes to participate in events and stuff. She would take me home because either my mom was still working, or I didn’t have a way home and had missed the bus, and she was stuck at school with me until I finished whatever activities that I was doing to take me home. She would encourage me during the summer time. She would also give me books to read. She would try to help me with homework that I might have had. She was just there as a motivator. Anytime that I needed her for anything, I could always call on her and she could help me. Another teacher that I had was my fourth grade math teacher. She was an AA woman, and she was pretty much just the best teacher I ever had. Not only did she teach me math, but she taught me how to be a young man and things I should be doing. When I was in the fourth grade, I went through a hard time. I had lost within three months, my grandmother, my grandfather, and my uncle got killed. Those were all of the main people that really raised me, so when I was in fourth grade, I went through a hard time and she was there the entire time. Still
to the day when she recently passed, she was always there to check on me. She may not have called, but she was always there to help me.

2. Does mentoring have an impact on leadership development among AA males enrolled in higher education?

a. Do mentors’ efforts help equip their protégés to be leaders?

When asked to “Describe some of the valuable things you learned from your mentor,” (P11) spoke directly to leadership development.

A whole lot about leadership. He always emphasized the responsibility of an AA, considering a lot of the issues he had faced coming up. He drove excellence into everything that he did. In all of his organizations, he wouldn’t accept just haphazard-type living or work or effort. It was the first influence and the biggest influence I had in terms of being a Christian and still being in those other roles – being a serious Christian, let me say – because there were several people carrying the title but weren’t for real about it in terms of lifestyles. That was the biggest area of influence for me.

(P6) Things I learned from her was how to read body language, how to understand people and where they’re coming from based upon their background and their cultural background, how to engage people on a deeper level when it comes to cultural understanding and understanding the world. Ultimately, it was a lot of interpersonal communication, how to work with individuals on an intimate level, and using culture, using our background and how we were raised or what we understand to be true as a way to engage healthy conversation, as is necessary to have amongst individuals. She helped me to become a better facilitator. She did a lot of facilitation training that I attended, and we also had 1-on-1 conversations about how I was applying that in my leadership
opportunities that I had on campus. That was a very important aspect to what I’ve been able to do in my professional life since I left… Following graduation from the university, I thought now I can take on the world! I was definitely like “yeah, I’m gonna lead. I’m gonna go get involved in these organizations. I’m gonna go impact my community. I’m gonna go impact a number of areas and people. I’m gonna go to Washington, D.C. I’m gonna go affect policy. I’m gonna go teach.” So I just knew after leaving the university I was more set to lead and to bring innovation and new ideas and to challenge the status quo after leaving that university.

(P12) spoke about how having a mentor helped instill what can be deemed as leadership characteristics.

I learned self-discipline because when it came time to study, they (my mentors) were in the books. So I knew that if I was going to be a part of even hanging out with them, not even necessarily joining the organization, per se, if I was going to hang out with these guys, they always had a time when they hit the books. So I had to learn a sense of self-discipline. I just couldn’t be in the circle and not embrace what they were about. So they helped me to really become self-disciplined and to be focused on my academics and to take school seriously. So I really learned from them the importance of why I was at university. I think that was the underpinning thing for me, that at the end of the day you’re here to get an education, and if you’re going to be in our circle, this is what we do. I also learned to be focused. I learned to be a student that was on a mission to obtain something, to accomplish the goals that I set out to accomplish by attending the university in the first place. I learned that it is important to communicate to them
(mentors) things that may have been obstructing me from doing as well as I could, that communication is key in terms of being in a relationship with a mentor.

3. Does mentoring have an impact on identity negotiation?

a. Do mentors help AA men in higher education overcome racial barriers?

When speaking about the impact that mentors had on their development, many of the participants brought up race and how they were taught to overcome racial barriers.

(P8) So he was able to give me a bit more broad advice, and Dr. Ferguson was able to give me kind of a more fine grain ‘this is how you make it’ type of advice. I learned to be more confident in my decision-making. I learned that you can’t use race as a crutch. You need to understand the dynamic that race introduces, but don’t use it as a crutch; and if you can use it to your advantage, then use it to your advantage. I learned patience. I learned being adventurous. I learned trying new things. I learned quite a bit.

(P5) I think the biggest thing you learn is just how to carry yourself. It’s one of those things that can’t really be taught in words, so this is the intangible; how to conduct yourself, how to carry yourself, how to walk straight up, how to look people in the eye. You see all that in other people. I stress black males on college campuses and probably in communities and churches, but we’re talking about in education. So on college campuses, it’s almost a royalty to it, a regalness, if you see black males on college campuses. It’s like ‘wow, okay!’ You know, suited up and dressing nice and conducting themselves in a good way; it’s somebody you can look up to. So that’s the intangible thing. You learn how to carry yourself, and in my opinion, it’s not something you necessarily can learn from somebody outside of your race if you’re a young black male. I mean, you want to learn that from somebody you believe grew up in your culture as well and look like you
and made it. That’s huge. So that’s the intangible thing you learn, just how to carry
yourself and how to conduct yourself. That’s major, Anthony. You know to pull your
pants up, that can change your life! The tangible things I think, with Cletus, he sat us
down and taught us how to conduct ourselves, how to handle bad situations. That may be
more intangible too, but how to handle situations with, for lack of a better phrase, the
‘establishment’, as an Alpha, as a fraternity, as a group. ‘Okay, y’all are going through
this. You can go up in there flailing your arms and getting all upset and throwing chairs at
the establishment, and nothing is gonna happen other than y’all gone get expelled and
y’all just gone get kicked out. Or, you can go in there, sit down, have a calm discussion,
and it should get handled in this way.’ That’s some of the tangible things Cletus taught us
– how to conduct ourselves as an organization, and obviously, that was teaching us how
to conduct ourselves individually as well.

(P15) The impact was growth and maturity. I didn’t feel as lonely doing certain things,
being engaged in issues surrounding my people or being engaged in current affairs. I
didn’t feel awkward that when I try to bring up something I saw on CNN that other
people couldn’t relate to. When other people couldn’t relate to it, I didn’t feel as
awkward. I felt like they were missing out. So the tables kind of turned. Before, if I did
bring something up, I felt like if someone else didn’t understand it or couldn’t engage
what I was saying, it was kind of like I was the awkward one. For me, they were the
awkward ones after that. I felt very very elitist, which I later came to work on. It was that
empowering where I wasn’t really as different. It felt good to know that there were
likeminded individuals who kind of showed me it’s okay to be young, black, and
professional. They helped me mature, to say the least.
b. Does the mentor relationship impact the way the protégé views himself and the world around him?

Each participant revealed how the mentor relationship changed the way they viewed themselves.

(P2) It was mostly that other people can see you for who you are. I learned that I didn’t have to try to be something that I was not and that I could be myself. They helped me realize that my even in my insecurities I was ok. I learned how to deal with my insecurities. The confidence that came along from those mentor relationships was critical in who I am.

(P3) I didn’t know as much as I thought I knew. I also learned that I had to be more humble and that education does not really start until you see through the eyes of another. Perpetual learning is a life long endeavor. Once you learn something, it is more beneficial to spread that information to everyone. It does not matter if they are your competitor. It made me want to be that much sharper than everyone else. I enjoyed spreading the wealth of information.

(P6) I learned I had a lot of growing to do. I’m not in the same city or area anymore. I was trying to be on the fast track, but they did help me realize I had a lot of growing to do and if I wanted to go where I wanted to go, there are some things that I needed to accomplish and see. They are the ones that encouraged me to study abroad. They’re the ones that encouraged me to want to take my studies overseas and to get involved in these organizations and projects. So, that’s exactly what I’ve done. That’s how they were able to let me look at myself, and be able to say, ‘I know where I want to go, how do I get there?’ To ensure that I don’t forget where I’m going, to keep me on task and on track. That was very helpful.
(P9) It exposed me to some of my weaknesses really. They re-affirmed some of my strengths, but it really made me be cognizant of areas that I can improve. While I had some mentors who were very cheerleader-ish, who always had good things to say; the mentors that I grew closest to were the ones who showed me where I could get better, the ones who were coaches to me. They showed me things like how I should carry myself, how I should speak to different people with business acumen. There were a lot of areas that weren’t as strong when I went into college, but because of those mentor relationships, I was able to develop them. They were able to expose those things to me, such as some of my weaknesses when it came to dealing with people, and helping me with patience. Those are the different things that I think my mentors, during undergrad and graduate school, helped pull out of me to help make me better.

**Emergent Themes**

The seven major themes in responses from research participants highlighted the common attributes of AA men who persist in higher education. A detailed discussion of the major themes follows.

**Theme 1: High Expectations.** Each of the participants expressed the presence of either an environment or a person who expected them to do well in school and pushed them accordingly. At various points in the interviews, One-hundred percent of the participants spoke about someone or something that demanded them to excel.

(P2) Like I said, my brothers, they had incentives to do well in school; $10 for every ‘A’, $5 for every ‘B,’ and I never got those same incentives because it was an expectation. I think that the level of expectation that was set was different; therefore, it was kind of engrained in me. I don’t want to say that I was held to a different standard, but to a
degree I was held to a different standard, and I think that kind of helped me overcome and achieve… My teachers addressed me differently. They knew that my brothers were who they were and had a reputation of being somewhat bad, and my teachers kind of knew that I was capable of that, but they knew I was better. So, their approach to me was a lot different and their communication with me. Really, if it weren’t for what they knew and the resources that they had, I don’t think that I would necessarily have been in the position that I am today.

(P6) I always knew I had to go to college; it wasn’t a choice. My mother was very strict about me going to college, and I had to make a decision. I wasn’t going into the military. She wasn’t having that; that was right after 9/11 had happened. It was quite interesting. There was never a choice of “oh, I think I am going to go to college.” It was “which college am I going to and where do I want to go study and what do I want to study?” because I really didn’t have a choice coming up.

(P15) Expectation. My at-home expectation was totally different from theirs. I can say until about 6th grade going to college was the same as going to grade 13. After 12th grade, it was college. The expectation was kind of infused in me to go to college right away. So I think expectation was the biggest thing.

**Theme 2: Compete and outperform.** The participants were surprisingly very competitive when it came to their educations. Several participants referred to their pursuit of their education in terms of it being ‘a competition.’

(P2) School was a competition for me, and I had to be the best. So I wouldn’t allow myself to do poorly. So yeah, it was just an unspoken expectation that I would do well and I would go to college.
(P13) I think another part of it is a competition, in that I think when we’re being brought up, we’re being pushed to be so much better than everybody because we have to work extra hard to succeed. So once we get into a place where we might see some other African American men that are doing well, we want to compete with them…

(P3) This goes back to my childhood to overcome challenges. I was determined to get around it. I made it a competition. All of the people that I knew viewed their education the same way. Failure was not an option.

(P8) I think it all stems from my competitive nature. It’s something that’s so ingrained in me, and any time I have the opportunity to prove that I’m better than you, not to say that from a place of arrogance, but from a place of competition, I want to produce something that’s better than what you produce. I just rise to that challenge. It’s an adrenaline rush for me. It’s almost a high, if you will. That’s what it is. It’s a competition; I need to be the best. That’s pretty much it. Then you switch it to a mold where I need to make me being the best actually happen.

Theme 3: Nature vs. Nurture. Another theme that emerged from the research was familial support. Sixteen participants (one-hundred percent) mentioned familial support in conjunction with an ingrained and natural thought process as an influence on their lives. The values and thought processes were so ingrained within them, that their actions became a part of their nature.

(P1) I am a big believer in nurture and in nature, so I definitely have to give my parents a lot of credit… I think a lot of it is personality and who wanted it and how determined the ambitious one is. We all went to the same high school, so we were all raised with fairly similar household dynamics. So, if I had to guess what differentiated them from me, I’d
say, really ambition is probably, in my opinion, the biggest factor. I have always been a pretty ambitious person, and I’ve always been very career focused; I’ll put it that way too. So, those 2 things were always very important for me… In terms of the value of working hard, like I said, my dad has always been a very, very hard worker, so he instilled that in me and instilled the importance of education. Those are kind of the early influencers and most consistent influencers in my life.

(P3) The number one person would be my father, and I still today I look up to my father. He was an extremely hardworking, honest person who believed that your word meant a lot, and your word was worth more than currency. My father taught me literally how to fish and a little bit of green thumb work as well. He was like ‘as long as you can fish, you’re honest, you can budget, and can live off of land, you’ll never go hungry and you can always feed your family. I’m no farmer Joe or anything like that, but I can survive. My dad just taught us life lessons day in and day out… My dad instilled in me the importance of paying it forward. It’s a part of my DNA to give back.

(P10) The common denominator for each of us was the fact that we had a community of people who supported us and expected us to succeed and do well. They instilled in us the concept that we were representing them in all that we did. The thought of letting them down was not an option. The church community was very influential in our progression… We had a very good sense of the importance of paying it forward. I wanted to leave something behind for those who would follow me.

**Theme 4: Asking for help is not a sign of weakness.** The fourth theme emphasized a willingness to ask for help. The data revealed that eighty-five percent of the surveyed participants needed and accepted help from others.
1. A greater sense of purpose. Even on days when I wanted to quit, having a sense of purpose kept me persisting. 2. Die to your pride. I realized that people who go to tutoring are the people who are the most serious about their education. The position of humility is one of power. 3. Asking for help. For some reason, many black men have trouble asking for help because they see it as a sign of weakness. 4. I was not alone. Recognizing people who I could turn to for help.

I think, him along with some of the stuff that my mother instilled in me – just the ability to learn how to do things, figure things out, and not be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

We also had a Director of Minority Affairs. He helped to show me the ropes of what it would take to be successful. He took me under his wings. I went to him in desperation and he told me that I was just like everyone else. He helped me to understand that I wasn’t alone and that I had resources available to me.

Theme 5: Birds of a feather flock together. Fifteen participants (ninety-five percent) spoke about having two or more best friends who ended up achieving similar successes. One of the initial assumptions of the researcher was that these men would likely have AA male friends growing up who were not as successful as they were.

I was blessed in the sense that, being my best friend, Jeff and I spoke about this all the time. We think that we benefited from being as close as we were to each other and pushing each other and things like that. Jeff is pursuing his doctorate right now. He’ll have that this summer. He’s a pastor, assistant athletic director, and basketball coach at a high school, and is pursuing his doctorate in education. We’ve pushed each other towards higher levels since the beginning. Cameron is currently in law school now. He is a very
successful gentleman who works for the general services administration of the
government. He’s up Northwest right now, and he has a pretty high-level position in his
company. He is currently in law school on top of that. My last friend is currently in
seminary pursuing his doctorate of theology.

(P3) Ray is currently a staff sergeant in the Army. He is a recruiter today up north. So
he’s doing very, very well... The next person would be Benford. If it’s 365 days a year,
we speak 335 of them. We speak that many days together! He does a lot of community
service, and he donates a lot of things that he has. He went to DuPaul University, got a
degree in IT or Information Systems... He works in Sales now.

(P4) John and I went to OSU together. We roomed together for 4 years. He is currently in
law school at Akron University, due to graduate this year. So those are my 3 best friends
right now. Evan graduated, working here in the city. Mike graduated, and is a Harlem
Globetrotter, so he does a lot of traveling. John graduated from OSU and is about to
graduate from law school.

**Theme 6: Natural inclination towards community service and involvement.** In the
second interview each participant spoke about their reasoning for being involved in community
service. Sixteen (one-hundred percent) revealed that community service was something that was
important or natural to them.

(P1) Giving back was the key motivator for me. The scholarship that I was involved with
required me to complete a certain number of study hours. That really set the tone for me
and sent the message that I was in college for a reason. That really set the foundation for
me to be successful academically.
(P2) It was a part of my fabric and, like I said, it was what I was conditioned to do. In doing so, I saw the benefit of being involved. I saw the benefit of giving back. I saw the impact firsthand.

(P8) Growing up, we did it as a family. Also, when I was away from my family I realized how fortunate I was, and I understood the importance of helping others. I felt like the least I could do was be whatever people needed in their lives. I felt like I owed that to people.

(P9) It was expected. There was a culture of community service at the school.

(P12) I think it has always been ingrained in me, kind of from my parents that we make sure to understand how fortunate we are and to keep that in perspective by giving back in whatever form. That was part of it, because my parents came from very, very, very poor backgrounds. So they were always trying to help whenever they could. They didn’t do community service projects, but they were helping people whenever they could. I think that was part of it. Another part of it, in many ways, stemmed from being a part of organizations in high school that was community service oriented. I think I realized through those experiences that I felt good about helping others. So there is definitely this reciprocal relationship where I go home and I feel better about it, but then I see that other people are appreciative of it as well.

Theme 7: Black Greek Organization Involvement

The last theme identified by the research is that fifteen of the participants were involved in a Black Greek Organization or a Fraternity. Being involved in these organizations also played a part in instilling key values in the participants and may be a connection to what Kezar and Carducci (2009) identified as Revolutionary Leadership.
As discussed earlier, Revolutionary Leadership has to do with impacting or changing something. Each of the participants were involved in their organizations because of the values each organization stood for and because they wanted to take part in making an impact. In fact, the only participant who did not get involved in student organizations or activities stated the reason to be that he did not believe organizations on the campus were really making an impact.

(P4) Part of that was because I always thought that a lot of organizations talked a lot but they really weren’t doing anything serious, you know? So that was part of the reason I never joined any organizations, fraternities, or anything like that. I think part of it was from my high school experiences with other athletes. What I mean by that it is, we had a lot of athletes that would be the main talkers on the team, trying to get you hyped up; however, on the field or on the court they really didn’t do anything, they weren’t that good. I saw that a lot also with student organizations in high school. Some of them would talk this good game, they want to do this and make these changes; it was more of them just meeting and meeting and meeting instead of actually doing some action and actually getting out there and doing stuff. So I noticed that as well in college in some of those organizations. That’s not the only reason. The other part was I was actually connected to a lot of the people who were in those organizations because I kind of knew everybody on campus, but I just wasn’t a part of an organization at all. So part of it was some of my experiences with people just talking and not actually doing any action, and the other part was me having a relationship with some of the folks who were involved with a lot but just not being a part of it.
Black Greek Organizational involvement also provided the AA male participants another outlet to be with others like them, which contributed to their feeling comfortable on the college campus in which they were involved. One participant expressed that without his involvement with the group, his experience would have been vastly different than it was.

Summary

The qualitative, phenomenological study used interview questions to explore the existence or lack thereof in non-cognitive variables in AA men who have persisted in higher education. Also explored was the impact that mentoring had on the facilitation of those variables. The data analysis revealed seven major themes with each of the sixteen participants experiencing three of the major themes.

The seven themes found in the study that contributed to AA men persisting in higher education were high expectations, compete and outperform as a means to overcoming challenges, nature vs. nurture, asking for help is not a sign of weakness, birds of a feather flock together and natural inclination towards community service and involvement. Chapter 5 presents the analysis of the results, conclusions, and implications for future research.

There were two instruments the research used to collect data, a three-interview process and a survey. Through using these instruments, the research was able to identify the variables and factors that helped AA men persist in higher education. According to Sedlacek (2004), the presence of non-cognitive variables leads to persistence for AA students.
CHAPTER V

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

In this chapter, the seven themes are discussed within the context of how they helped AA men persist in higher education. Research has historically reported that AA males are lagging behind all other ethnic groups in higher education (Harper, 2012; Jones and Jackson, 2003). This chapter provides a summary of the impact of mentoring on the development of non-cognitive variables, which then impacts the persistence of AA men in higher education. Further highlighted are the implications for professionals in student affairs on college campuses. Lastly, future research is suggested as it relates to AA men in higher education.

Discussion

Using the Sedlacek Model survey, it appeared that more than eighty-five percent of the AA male participants possessed the eight non-cognitive variables, and one-hundred percent of the participants possessed at least seven out of eight variables. Sedlacek (2004, 2007, 2010) identified the eight variables as predictors of success for AA men in higher education. Using a three-interview process, the research was able to identify seven additional themes, and several of the themes appeared to be extensions of the eight non-cognitive variables. All of the participants expressed the expectation to complete their degrees with at least a Bachelor degree. Half of the participants expected to obtain a Doctorate degree. As found in the survey, fifty percent of the participants believed they were just as skilled as any other student at their respective institutions. However, thirty percent of the surveyed participants were neutral. Sixty-five percent of the participants believed in their abilities and were confident and absolutely certain they would complete their degrees. Fourteen of the participants believed that although it would have been much more difficult to persist in college without a mentor, they still would have graduated. This
finding suggests that their skills were developed through mentor or familial support prior to arriving at the college. There were two participants, however, who shared that they would have not been able to complete their degrees without the presence of a mentor to help them matriculate higher education. All of the participants discussed their ability to overcome the obstacles presented by the higher education system. Eighty-one percent of the participants attributed their ability to overcome to having a mentor, with some of the participants referencing their view of higher education as a “game” or “competition” they wanted to master.

The participants’ persistence in higher education was also facilitated by their involvement and connectedness to the institutions they were a part of. Stemming from their childhoods, each participant was highly involved in organizational groups, sports, campus support groups, and many other activities. Being involved helped instill a sense of belonging. They felt like they were a part of the institution they attended.

Following is a discussion of the themes that helped each of the participants to navigate higher education. The themes identified in the study were high expectations, compete and outperform, nature vs. nurture, birds of a feather flock together, asking for help, natural inclination towards community service, and involvement in a Black Greek Organization.

**Theme 1 – High Expectations**

The first theme, *high expectations*, emerged because all the participants stated they had people in their lives who expected more out of them. Whether it was a teacher, parent, family member, or community leader, there were people in each of their lives who expected them to rise beyond mediocrity and status quo. The high expectations theme is also in agreement with Harper’s (2012) findings in his black male achievement study. The participants in his study mentioned how they, too, had people in their lives that pushed them to excel. The participants in
this study mentioned teachers who may have responded to them differently than they did others because of the perceived potential. Participant 2, in particular, mentioned how his brothers were treated differently by not only family, but by teachers also. Everyone expected him to make good grades and to go to college, but the same expectations were not equally placed on his siblings. High expectations, therefore, followed the participants into college when they eventually became involved with their mentors. While participants expected to complete college, their mentors helped them to actually navigate their paths. It was through a heightened sense of expectation that mentors challenged their AA protégé’s to strive and to persist in higher education. Mentors also expected the AA men to view their situations differently when faced with challenges. (P13) asserted that it was his mentor who helped him to view experiences with an open mind. He stated:

I learned that I can be impatient and not allow for multiple perspectives. I also learned that my experience growing up was not the only type or style out there.

*The downside for other AA males in higher education*

The downside to the high expectations theme is that many other AA males in higher education do not arrive with the same level of expectations (Harper, 2012). (P2’s) experience with his brothers also supports Harper’s claim. When asked to describe their childhoods and whether they believed they would complete their degrees, one-hundred percent of the participants referred to high expectations that others had of them. Further, when asked to explain what separated the participants from many of their AA male counterparts, they all mentioned high expectations. The research identified that while growing up, some of the participants noticed the difference in the way they were treated by family and even teachers. One participant mentioned how his family and teachers always expected him to go to college but that his brothers
had a different level of expectation placed upon them. Another participant spoke about how he felt some of the help he received was partially due to his being a football player. He stated that if he were not a football player, he did not believe people would have been so willing to help him. Each of the participants had a high expectation placed on them. Each participant in the study referenced the encouragement they received during their time in higher education. The research findings also suggested that low graduation rates for AA men could be explained by the lack of encouragement that many AA men in higher education receive. (P15) also referenced a lack of understanding by higher education institutions when asked what he felt institutions could do to help more AA men.

(P15) One, colleges have to understand that AA men are not all the same and that we do come with different struggles. The outcome of our struggles might be the same, but our reasons for the struggles are different. So taking more time to understand the various struggles will aid in helping black men.

**Theme 2 – Compete to outperform**

The participants also expressed an attitude of competition as it pertained to overcoming their challenges. Since there were no questions geared towards competition, the idea of competition surfaced at various moments in the interview process. Some of the participants referred to having a competition with their friends to be better academically. Another participant mentioned his pride prevented him from doing poorly academically. When expressing his frustration about not being rewarded for good grades, (P2) said that he wanted to slack off, but that he couldn’t because of his pride and the fact that he viewed education as a competition. (P8) was so competitive that he entered one of the largest universities in the state of Georgia with the goal of graduating at the top of his class, which he did. Other participants spoke about how they
viewed education as a game or some sort of a contest. A competitive mindset seemed to serve as a coping mechanism for some of the participants and as a motivational tool for the others. Regardless, competition was one of the driving forces that helped the AA male participants to get through higher education.

**Theme 3 – Nature vs. Nurture**

Over and over in the research, participants reasoned that their belief systems or their actions were simply a part of “who they were,” or the “way they were raised.” The research identified the two-fold key reason for the persistence of the AA men in the study: They were raised and molded by positive people who taught them core values, and/or they were simply wired in a way that would not allow them to settle for less. Intrinsically, they were how they thought. The participants appeared to possess a combination of both nature and nurture. Because, as (P1) stated:

I’ve seen a lot of scenarios where you’ve had parents that have done all the right things and their kids just weren’t that ambitious. They probably did okay but didn’t do maybe as well as the parents had hoped or whatever. But then I’ve also seen it where parents were kind of off in left field somewhere and the kid sort of miraculously grows, sort of a diamond in the rough scenario or whatever.

So while mentoring is vital, there is a large responsibility that lies within each individual person.

**Theme 4 – Asking for help is not a sign of weakness**

Three of the participants suggested that one of the many reasons AA men do not get involved in mentor relationships or ask for help is because their pride or egos get in the way.

(P4) I think part of it, again, is ego; ego and not wanting to ask for help. I think some young black men kind of raised themselves in a sense, especially those who didn’t
grow up with their father or father figures. They were the answers to all of their questions; they had to figure it out. So I think that mentality also carries over to college at times – ‘I’ll just figure it out. I can handle it myself.’ So their ego would be crushed if they had to ask for help.

The participants, however, behaved differently. The study found that eighty-five percent of the participants acknowledged their need for help during their time in higher education. They weren’t afraid to ask questions about how to navigate higher education. Asking questions and seeking guidance was critical in the participants’ persistence in higher education because through seeking guidance from mentors, they were able to get answers to their experienced obstacles that they would not have otherwise been able to get answers to. Each of the participants referenced how the mentor relationships connected them to resources or scholarship opportunities that would not have been available apart from the relationships. In a mentor/protégé context, asking for personal guidance provided the AA men outlets and opportunities for further development. For them, asking for help was not a sign of weakness but one of strength. Specific examples of opportunities, and additional guidance the participants received through their mentors are highlighted below:

(P4) I think, him along with some of the stuff that my mother instilled in me – just the ability to learn how to do things, figure things out, and not be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I think part of college is not just getting a degree, but it’s actually the process of learning how to do things. What happens when somebody tells you ‘no’ in one department? How do you ask to speak to somebody else who might tell you ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’? I think just the fact that he helped me learn how to not let your ego get in the way, ask for help. He helped me to really understand the process of college, and it kind of
transferred over to just life in general, being able to figure things out, ask for help, know how to ask somebody else about something when somebody else tells you ‘no’ or tells you that you can’t do something. So I just think that a lot of what I saw in them was kind of transferrable just to life in general.

(P7) Having a mentor always encouraged me to go after leadership roles within organizations. My mentor always would tell me about leadership opportunities and resume building opportunities.

(P8) Life-long friendships I think is probably the best and the first thing that comes to mind. Recommendation letter writers when you want to go to graduate school or even for jobs after you graduate college. If you had a long-standing relationship with a mentor, you’ve got a mentor that has seen you grow from freshman year (or whatever year you start interacting with the mentor) until you graduate and need a recommendation letter. What better person to be able to write that for you than somebody that you would consider a mentor? Somebody to plug you into certain networks and, lastly, just somebody to point others to that enter the college after you.

(P11) I’m not sure that I would have made it through the university if I didn’t have their positive influences of those Alphas, or it probably would have taken me longer to graduate. The intangible reward was just their positive influence on me and seeing that those guys were about their business, and because they were graduating from the university, I believed I could graduate too. I felt like if they could do it, I could do it also. Just providing me with the motivation and the drive to achieve and actually to graduate from the university was huge. I don’t know if I actually would have graduated if I didn’t have those influences. I probably would have graduated later than I was supposed to.
Having a mentor provided me scholarship and speaking opportunities.

**Theme 5 – Birds of a feather flock together**

Having friends who attended and persisted in higher education was also a theme identified by the research. When asked to speak about their three best AA friends growing up, the research found that each of the participants had at least one friend who attended and persisted in higher education. Most of them had at least two friends to graduate college. One of the participants who earned a law degree also spoke about two childhood friends who were in the process of obtaining Doctorate degrees at the time of the interviews. The research therefore discovered that the AA male participants were similar in that they identified with others who were similar to themselves. Having friends with similar ideas often had a similar impact as the competition theme mentioned earlier. Their relationships with their friends created an environment where each participant wanted to do better than his friends. Such environments proved highly beneficial for the participants in the study.

**Theme 6 – Natural inclination towards community service**

The sixth theme identified by the research was that each of the participants possessed a natural propensity to participate in community service. When speaking about their involvement, each participant mentioned the importance of giving back and helping others. All but one of the participants were involved in community service during college. The one participant who was not involved in community service was very involved in sports while in college. When asked why it was important to get involved in community service one participant spoke about being indebted to the community.

(P15) I’m indebted to my community; I really am. Like I said, I grew up in a good neighborhood, but I spent some time in places where people who had less than me still
gave and invested into my future, which is mindboggling to think about! For instance, when I worked at the YMCA, there was an older gentleman who didn’t have too much, but every Sunday he’d make me dinner so that as soon as I got home from work, I could just go straight to my books and not have to worry about food. Acts like that remind me that I must give back to my community.

Giving back to the community not only helped the communities the men were a part of, but it also seemed to help keep the participants grounded and appreciative about what they had.

**Theme 7: Black Greek Organization Involvement**

The fact that nearly all of the participants had involvement with a Black Greek Organization speaks to the importance of AA men in higher education being able to have an outlet where they can go to not only be challenged, but also have interactions with people who they can relate to (Harper, 2005; Pascarella Terenzini, 2004). As found in the literature review, an AA male’s involvement in campus organizations often correlated with decision-making, problem solving, and leadership skills (Harper, 2005). According to the National Pan-Hellenic Council website (nphc.org), there are a total of nine Black Greek Organizations for men and women, and all of them are service oriented. Involvement in such organizations is one of the ways that the participants were able to cope with the higher education system.

**Implications**

This study adds to a body of limited research on AA men in higher education and the factors that lead to their persistence in college. This study, like others, found that high expectations, competition, nature vs. nurture, asking for help, having like-minded friends, community service, and involvement in a Black Greek Organization led to the persistence of the sixteen participants. What this study highlights, however, that other studies have not is how
mentoring has an impact on the eight non-cognitive variables. Mentoring was found to indirectly lead to the persistence of AA men in higher education through the facilitation of the eight non-cognitive variables.

Findings from this study suggest various implications for educators and student affairs professionals in higher education. The findings demonstrate the importance of having guidance from teachers, family, and other mentors well before a student enters higher education. However, having a mentor in higher education contributed to the enhancement of non-cognitive variables and leadership skills in AA male students.

**Practice**

The research found that the colleges that have the best persistence rates among AAs in higher education also have programs and/or departments that are geared towards them (JBHE, 2013). AA men were able to persist because they found support and other outlets that made them feel like they belonged at the institution. The more a college does to create a sense of belonging for AA men, the higher the persistence among them will likely be. Examples of such practices should include: black male initiative programs that facilitate mentor connections with other AA male leaders, leadership opportunities for AA men to become involved in, hiring more AA faculty and administrators, faculty-student relationships, and intrusive advising.

**Black Male Initiative Programs**

Providing opportunities for AA men in higher education to become involved in mentor relationships is vital because not every AA male student will arrive at the institution with proper expectations or academic preparedness. The reality is that many AA men in higher education are the first in their families to attend college. The men in this study, although persistent, mentioned how unprepared they were for the academic rigors of higher education. Mentors helped to set
them on the right track to navigating higher education. When asked why they felt most other AA males do not get involved in on campus programs and activities, the overwhelming response was that other AA students do not feel like the groups or activities are relevant to them, or that they do not see others like them involved in most activities and programs on campus. Black male initiative programs would immediately give voice to AA men and give them a place they can be heard. By increasing the comfort level for AA men, they would be much more likely to persist and become immersed in what the campus has to offer. When there are people in place whose jobs are to serve as support and mentors to AA men, the impact is tremendous. The colleges that were mentioned earlier are having an impact with programs that target AAs in higher education.

**Leadership Opportunities**

It could also be of value for colleges to create more leadership opportunities for AA men to develop leadership skills. Such opportunities could come in the form of leadership workshops that speak to the issues and needs of AA men in leadership. Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas spends hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to bring in speakers to help motivate students. Although their enrollment and budget is lower than most other colleges, they have found it important to provide leadership opportunities in the form of students hearing from leaders who look like the students. Leadership workshops would help AA men to learn what each of the participants learned in terms of their being able to lead and have an impact regardless of their race. Due to there being a lack of AA professionals on many college campuses, there is also a need for administrators to involve themselves in activities that may otherwise be uncomfortable to them, such as taking part in AA male initiatives. Just as AA men have a responsibility to adapt and adjust, it is equally important for college professionals to step outside
their comfort zones and participate in initiatives that serve AA men in higher education. College professionals must begin to model the change they hope to see in their students and institutions.

**Recruiting and Hiring More AA Professionals**

Five of the participants in this study suggested that institutions hire more AA professionals as a way to improve the persistence rate for AA men in higher education. Their belief is that by having more people on campus that AA men can relate to, AA men will feel like they belong. One of the participants suggested that one of the reasons many AA men want only to be professional athletes is because that is where they see the most AA men succeeding. In many of the communities of AA boys, the only men they see making money are drug dealers, rappers, or athletes. Not often enough do they see AA men in high leadership roles at institutions of higher education. One of the best ways to change the perceptions of AA men is to change what they see. The best way to show the college values them is by placing more people around them that they can relate to.

**Faculty-Student Relationships**

A fourth area of concern that colleges and universities should focus on is the facilitation of faculty-student relationships. Fourteen of the participants expressed they had good experiences with their instructors during their time in higher education. Their feelings about their experiences, however, were connected with what they described as their instructors’ willingness or unwillingness to embrace them and make them feel welcome. The participants also expressed how they appreciated the instructors that pushed them to be and do better. One way for colleges and universities to put this into practice is by setting aside times throughout the semester where students can meet their instructors outside of the classroom setting. The purpose of the events would be for students and faculty members to learn more about one another. In the classroom
setting interactions tend to be more one-sided, whereas, in a more neutral setting students can develop a personal relationship with the instructor.

Faculty-Student relationship building environments could also be used as a means to create mentor type relationships between students and faculty. The University of North Texas has The ACCESS (Advocates Creating Conversations that Engage and Support Students) Mentoring Program, which “is designed to provide students the opportunity to connect with a member of UNT’s faculty and staff as well as a peer mentor.” Source: (www.unt.edu) According to the website:

“The program matches faculty/staff mentors and a peer mentor with a student mentoring group based on interests reported on the respective applications. Faculty and staff mentors are asked to interact with their mentees at least once each month. Additionally, mentees are asked to initiate interaction with their mentor at least once a semester.”

Programs like ACCESS at UNT have the ability to eliminate student anonymity by providing students with a person who is truly able to help them persist in higher education. It also helps establish relationships between faculty and students through meaningful dialogue.

**Intrusive Advising**

Intrusive advising is another initiative that colleges should consider. Some of the participants in the study expressed how unprepared, and even how angry they were upon entering college. For them, however, they had mentors and pre-developed non-cognitive skills that helped them along the way. This research examined the stories of sixteen men who were able to navigate and persist in higher education by figuring out how to navigate on their own and with the help of mentors.
There are AA men in higher education who arrive without being as developed non-cognitively, and more importantly without the help and encouragement of mentors. Intrusive advising programs are great tools when it comes to taking an assertive approach in AA males’ persistence in higher education. Part of the intrusive advising program could be to require all AA men to be advised by a certain group of people or to go to a specific office before they can register for classes. There, they would be able to receive personal advising and learn about what the college has to offer them in their efforts to persist in higher education. Through the intrusive advising program, the participating college would be able to inform young men that the institution will be tracking their attendance, grades and tutoring hours. Some colleges such as Tyler Junior College does part of this through what is called an Early Alert program (Academic Foundations. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.tjc.edu/info/2004132/academic_foundations).

Another aspect of an intrusive advising type program is implementing a requirement for AA men who enter college with low test scores to take a 1 hour seminar course that teaches them not only study skills, but also deals with issues they might face as AA men.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This research study helps to bridge the gap in the existing literature on AA men in higher education. As mentioned in the first chapter, there is little research about the reasons that AA men persist in higher education. Most of the research is negative and focuses more on the many obstacles that AA men experience.

Future research is needed about self-imposed factors that prevent AA men from persisting in higher education. It is difficult to argue with the low graduation rates of AA men in higher education, but one area that often goes unaddressed is the issue of many AA men leaving for sports related reasons, such as going to the pros or leaving school after getting injured. In this
study, one of the participants mentioned how he dealt with thoughts of leaving college following his sports related injury. He felt that he no longer had a reason for attending college. Another self-imposed reason for low graduation rates amongst AA men could be their misuse of government funds to attend college. Future research should consider the impact that students leaving school after receiving financial aid has on overall college completion rates.

Additionally, research should focus more exclusively on the relationships between persistent AA males and faculty. Through a comparative study on how faculty-student relationships aid in AA male persistence in higher education, researchers can compare how students without positive relationships compare to students who do experience positive relationships with faculty.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, more in-depth research is necessary on the various types of programs that colleges have implemented to help AA men in higher education to persist. This research uncovered the existence of many programs that colleges have implemented, but understanding how wide ranging they are, and how they directly correlate to graduation rates could prove to be groundbreaking.

Towards the middle of this research, America experienced an election for the ages. What occurred on the Election Day wasn’t so much about Barak Obama or Mitt Romney, but about America changing before the eyes of the American people. Barak Obama’s victory validated what researchers have identified as a demographic shift not only in America, but in higher education today (The College Board, 2005). In 2012, President Obama received 93% of the AAs votes, 71% of Hispanics, and 73% of Asians. Romney received 6%, 27%, and 26% respectively.
What does that say about America and higher education? It says that the voice of minorities has more meaning and is much larger than it has ever been. As the demographics in the country continue to shift, the methods used to retain students in higher education will also be required to change. No longer can institutions use outdated methods and hope for different results. Many colleges have begun to implement more programs targeting AA students, but more colleges will need to do so in order to improve the persistence rates of AA men in higher education.

**Conclusion**

Through this research, the lived experiences of sixteen AA men who persisted in higher education were explored. Through conversations with each participant, it became evident that they all truly found value in the experiences they had. Some of them wished their experiences could have been better, but they enjoyed their experiences nonetheless. They were not so prideful as to avoid asking for help, and they did not use their race as an excuse for not doing well. Does that mean they did not experience racism or injustices? Absolutely not, but it does suggest that they were able to maintain a higher view of their desired destination. Therefore, mentors helped them to navigate the system for their benefit.

One of the more inspiring stories in the study came from (P2). (P2) spent most of his life without his mother and father. At the time this research was conducted, he had never met his father. Yet despite moving from state to state and between family members, he received a full academic scholarship to one of the most prestigious universities in the country, and he is living
out his dreams today. There were many moments in his life he could have quit and given up. However, he used his situation as motivation and more reason to stay involved. (P2’s) story is an inspiration to all AA men. When life knocks them down, it is their choice to get back up. When life is unfair, it is their choice to be a victim of their circumstances or a victor.

The research validated the impact of non-cognitive variables that help AA men persist in higher education. It also found that mentoring does help facilitate the non-cognitive variables that help AA men persist in higher education. Prior to this research, literature revealed that mentoring has an impact on AA men in higher education. Scholarly literature also documented that non-cognitive variables lead to the persistence of AA men in higher education. However, it had been unknown if mentoring helps to facilitate the non-cognitive variables. This study was able to fill a small knowledge gap. Therefore, leadership development through mentoring does indirectly lead to the persistence of AA men in higher education by facilitating non-cognitive variables. The hope is that more institutions of higher education will implement more programs and initiatives to ensure that all students are persistent, including AA men in higher education.
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APPENDIXES
**Variable Item #1: POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT**

*This variable assesses the protégé’s confidence, self-esteem, independence, and determination, all vital components of future achievement and success.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé feel confident of making it through graduation?</td>
<td>Did the protégé express any reason he might not complete school or succeed and attain his goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé make positive statements about himself?</td>
<td>Did the protégé express concerns that other students were better than he was?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé expect to achieve his goals and perform well in academic and non-academic areas?</td>
<td>Did the protégé expect to have marginal grades?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé provide evidence how he felt he would attain his goals?</td>
<td>Did the protégé have trouble balancing his personal and academic life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé link his interests and experiences with his goals?</td>
<td>Did the protégé appear to avoid new challenges or situations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé assume he could handle new situations or challenges?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variable #2: REALISTIC SELF-APPRAISAL
This variable assesses the protégé’s ability to recognize and accept his strengths and deficiencies, especially in academics, and works hard at self-development to broaden his individuality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé aware of his strengths and weaknesses?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of how evaluations were done in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé know what it took to pursue a given career?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unsure about his own abilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé realistic about his abilities?</td>
<td>Was the protégé uncertain about how his peers or superiors rated his performances?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show an awareness of how his service, leadership, extracurricular activities, or schoolwork has caused him to change over time?</td>
<td>Did the protégé overreact to positive or negative reinforcement rather than seeing it in a larger context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the protégé learned something from these structured or unstructured activities?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of how he was doing in his classes prior to grades being posted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé appreciate and understand both positive and negative feedback?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of positive and negative consequences of his grades, actions, or skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé provide evidence of overcoming anger, shyness, and lack of discipline?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé face a problem, like a bad grade, with determination to do better?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variable #3: SUCCESSFULLY HANDLES THE SYSTEM (RACISM)
This variable assesses the protégé’s ability to understand the role of the ‘system’ in life and to develop a method of assessing the cultural/racial demands of the system and respond accordingly/assertively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé able to overcome challenges or obstacles he was confronted with as a result of racism in a positive and effective way?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of how the “system” works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé understand the role of the “system” in his/her life and how it treats nontraditional persons?</td>
<td>Was the protégé preoccupied with racism or did not feel racism existed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé reveal ways that he/she has learned to “deal” with the “system” accordingly?</td>
<td>Did the protégé blame others for his/her problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the protégé react with the same intensity to large or small issues concerned with race?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the protégé's method for successfully handling racism that did not interfere with personal and academic development nonexistent?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Variable #4: PREFERENCE FOR LONG-TERM GOALS

*This variable assesses the protégé’s persistence, patience, long term planning, and willingness to defer gratification and success in college.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé reveal experience setting both academic and personal long-term goals?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack evidence of setting and accomplishing goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the protégé provide evidence that he/she is planning for the future?</td>
<td>Is the protégé likely to proceed without clear direction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the protégé determined a course of study and anticipate the type of career or path he/she might or could pursue?</td>
<td>Does the protégé rely on others to determine outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the protégé aware of realistic and intermediate steps necessary to achieve goals?</td>
<td>Does the protégé focus too much attention to the present?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the protégé participated in activities (volunteer work, employment, extra courses, community work) related to his/her anticipated career goal?</td>
<td>Is the protégé’s plan for approaching a course, school in general, an activity, etc. nonexistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the protégé states his/her goals, are the goals vague or unrealistic?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Variable #5: AVAILABILITY OF STRONG SUPPORT PERSON

*This variable assesses the protégé’s availability of a strong support network, help, and encouragement, and the degree to which he/she relies solely on her/his own resources.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé have a strong support system? (This can be a personal, professional, academic support as long as it is someone the protégé can turn to for advice, consultation, assistance, encouragement etc.)</td>
<td>Did the protégé avoid turning to a support person, mentor, or close advisors for help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé willing to admit that he needed help and able to pull on other resources, other than himself, to solve problems?</td>
<td>Did the protégé keep his problems to himself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the protégé state that he can handle things on his own?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the protégé state that access to a previous support person may have been reduced or eliminated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the protégé unaware of the importance of a support person?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variable #6: LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

*This variable assesses the protégé’s skills developed or influence exercised from his/her formal and informal leadership roles.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé take leadership initiative, for example by founding clubs/organizations? What evidence was there?</td>
<td>Was the protégé unable to turn to others for advice or direction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé describe the skills he developed as a leader, skills such as assertiveness, effectiveness, organizing, and time management?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack confidence or leadership skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show evidence of influencing others and being a good role model?</td>
<td>Was the protégé passive or did he lack initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé comfortable providing advice and direction to others?</td>
<td>Was the protégé overly cautious?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé describe a commitment to being a role model for siblings, community members, or schoolmates?</td>
<td>Did the protégé avoid controversy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show sustained commitment to one or two types of organizations with increasing involvement, skill development and responsibility?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé take action and initiative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Variables #7: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

*This variable assesses the protégé’s identification with a cultural, geographic, or racial group and his/her demonstrated activity within that community grouping.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé show sustained commitment to a service site or issue area?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack involvement in cultural, racial or geographical group or community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé demonstrate a specific or long-term commitment or relationships with a community?</td>
<td>Was the protégé involved in his/her community in name only?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé accomplished specific goals in a community setting?</td>
<td>Did the protégé engage more in solitary rather than group activities (academic or non-academic)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé’s community service relate to career or personal goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Variable #8: KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED IN A FIELD**

This variable assesses the protégé’s experiences gained in a field through study and experiences beyond the classroom. This variable pays particular attention to the ways the protégé gains non-traditional, perhaps culturally or racially based views of the field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Evidence</th>
<th>Negative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the protégé use his/her knowledge to teach others about the topic?</td>
<td>Did the protégé lack evidence of learning from the community or non-academic activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the protégé working independently in his/her field? (Be sensitive to variations between academic fields and the experiences that can be gained. For example, if in the sciences, by doing independent research, or if in the arts or crafts, by participating in competitions or compositions.)</td>
<td>Was the protégé traditional in his/her approach to learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the protégé unaware of his/her possibilities in a field of interest?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM
**Research Title:** A Study of African American men who persisted in higher education: A case for leadership development through mentoring.

**Researcher:** Anthony Robinson Jr., PhD Leadership Candidate, Tennessee Temple University

**Study Purpose:**

You are invited to participate in a research study on African American men who have successfully obtained their baccalaureate degree at an accredited four-year college or university. The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences and impact of mentoring on those African American men who successfully graduated from college. The desire is to gain insight into the non-cognitive variables that were enhanced through a mentor relationship and subsequently encouraged their success.

**Procedures:**

The procedures will consist of a 3 interview process of open-ended interview questions relating to your experiences as an African American male college student. In addition to the interview questions there will be a brief (36 question) survey designed to measure the following factors:

1) Positive-self concept

2) Realistic self-appraisal

3) Demonstrated community service

4) Knowledge acquired in the field

5) Successful leadership experience

6) Long range goals

7) Ability to understand and cope with racism

8) Availability of a strong support person/system
Digital recorders and note taking will be used to record your comments during the interview. All tapes and written notes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research project.

**Risks of Participating in the Study:**

The participants will not experience any foreseeable risks and/or discomfort to participate in this study. However, you may choose to not answer certain questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

**Benefits of the Research**

The results of this study will provide a basis for future interest in developing programs on college campuses for African-American male students. It will also give college bound African-American males a map for better navigating their paths toward attaining their baccalaureate degree.

**Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of participants will be protected. Information that is obtained in this study, which could be identified with you, will remain confidential. Names will not be used on the questionnaire. Questionnaires will be destroyed after tabulation of results.

**Compensation**

No compensation will be offered for your participation.

**Contacts**

If you have any questions about this research project, you may contact Anthony Robinson Jr., PhD Candidate, Leadership, Tennessee Temple University, Chattanooga TN 37404, (903) 570-4924 robinsonag@tntemple.edu or my advisor, Dr. Andrew Alexson, Dean, College of Business & Leadership, Tennessee Temple University, Chattanooga TN 37404, (423) 493-4474,
PhD@ntemple.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may also contact Dr. Fonda Harris, Dissertation Chair, fonda.harris@nashville.gov.

**Participant’s Rights**

Your participation is voluntary. As a participant in this research, you are entitled to know the nature of my research. You are free to decline to participate, and you are free to stop the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. No penalty exists for withdrawing your participation.

**Consent Documentation**

I have read understood the consent form and have been given a copy of the form. I understand my signature means that I am agreeing to participate in this study. I sign it freely and voluntarily. I agree to take part in this study.

_________________________ _______________________
Signature of Participant          Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting signature of participant.

_________________________ _______________________
Signature of Researcher          Date
APPENDIX C

NON-COGNITIVE QUESTIONAIRRE
Questions from the non-cognitive questionnaire, via Survey Monkey.

1. How much education did you expect to get during your lifetime?
   1. Associate’s degree
   2. College, but less than a bachelor’s degree
   3. B.A. or equivalent
   4. One or two years of graduate or professional study (master’s degree)
   5. Doctoral Degree

2. About 50 percent of college students typically leave before finishing a program. If this had happened to you, what would have been the most likely cause?
   1. Absolutely certain that I was going to finish
   2. To accept a good job
   3. To enter military service
   4. It cost more than my family or I could afford
   5. Marriage
   6. Disinterest in study
   7. Lack of academic ability
   8. Insufficient ready or study skills
   9. Other

3. Please list three goals that you had for yourself.
   1._____________________________________________________________
   2._____________________________________________________________
   3.___________________________________________________________

4. Please list three things that you were proud of having done:
5. Please list groups belonged to (formal or informal) and offices held (if any) in your high school or community.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following items. Respond to the statements below with your feelings during your attendance at your university.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>2 Neutral</th>
<th>3 Disagree</th>
<th>4 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>5 Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am sometimes looked up to by others.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>There was no use in doing things for people; you only find that you get it in the neck in the long run.</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I expected to have a harder time than most students there did.</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Once I start something, I finish it.</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I was as skilled academically as the average applicant there.</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I expected to encounter racism at that school.</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>People could pretty easily change me even though I thought my mind was already made up on the subject.</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>My friends and relatives did not feel I should have gone to college.</td>
<td>______</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. I wanted a change to prove myself academically.
15. I enjoyed working with others.
16. My background helped me fit in well there.
17. My friends look at me to make decisions
18. I expected the faculty to treat me differently from the average student there.
19. I was uncomfortable interacting with people from other races or culture.
20. I tried to find opportunities to learn new things.
21. I thought many people saw racism where it didn’t exist.
22. I expected to be picked on by other students and faculty because of my background.
23. Everyone must work toward improving social conditions.
24. I often made list of things to do.
25. I kept pretty much to myself.
26. I sometimes needed help from others.
27. I preferred to be spontaneous rather than make plans.
28. I have done work in many community projects.
29. I had already learned something in my proposed major field outside of high school.
30. I was not good at getting others to go along with me.
31. It was more important to study than to get involved in campus activities.
32. I usually noted important dates on my calendar.
33. The best way to avoid problems was to take things one day at a time.
34. I have studied things about my field on my own.
35. I expected to have little contact with students from other races.
36. I enjoyed being a student.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The first interview will focus on the participant’s life history.

- How would you describe your childhood growing up?
- What type of high school did you attend? What was HS like for you?
- Tell me about your 3 best blk male childhood friends. What are they doing right now?
- What differentiated your path from theirs, or you and your friend’s paths from the average African American male that you grew up with?
- What type of activities were you involved in during high school?
- Who were some of your biggest influences growing up?
- How do you feel that your high school experience did or did not prepare you for college?
- When and why did you decide to go to college?
- During your high school days did you feel supported to go to college?
- Did either of your parents or siblings attend college? Did they graduate?
- What did you expect of the university just prior to your arrival?
- What were your initial goals?
- What type of activities did you plan to be involved in during college?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I did not ask?

The second interview will focus on participants’ experience as an African American male in a mentor-protégé relationship while in college, as well as their involvement while in school.

- Describe to me your initial days on a college campus? Any struggles?
- How would you describe your professors?
- What was your first encounter with your mentor during college? Why did you decide to get involved in a relationship with him? What did you learn from this relationship?
- Were you involved in any organizations or campus activities?
- What motivated you to get involved?
- Why do you think you there are so few African American college men involved in relationships with mentors?
- Why do you think so few of them get involved in the life of the campus and/or student organizations?
- How did you see yourself as a leader following graduation vs. how you saw yourself upon entering college?
- Describe some of the valuable things that you learned from your mentor.
- What was your involvement in community service related activities?
- Why did you feel it was important to be involved in community service?

The third interview will focus on a reflection of their experience.
What was your experience as a African American man in college like?
What challenges did you face? How did these challenges make you feel?
What impact, if any, do you believe having a mentor provided for you as an African American man in college?
What rewards, tangible or intangible did such a relationship offer?
What did you learn about yourself from this experience?
What did you learn about the higher education system for African American men?
Did you feel supported by the African American student community? If so in what ways? If not why do you think they did not support you?
Had you not had a mentor during college, what you think the results would have been?
Why do you think most Black men do not get involved in the life of the college?
Why do you think the graduation rates for Black men are so low?
In what way have you personally changed by having a mentor?
Would you recommend colleges provide mentor opportunities for African American men? Why or why not?
If you could give advice to African American men in college who may be struggling, what would you say?
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Anthony Robinson Jr. and I am a PhD candidate at Tennessee Temple University in Leadership. My dissertation topic is on Successful African American men who graduated from college: A case for leadership development through mentoring.

At this point in my research, I am seeking individuals who are willing to participate in three rounds of one-on-one interviews and a survey. Specifically, I need participants who meet the following criteria:

(1) Identity themselves as African American, Black, non-Hispanic
(2) Received formal or informal mentoring while in college (Definition of Mentor Attached)
(3) Graduated from an accredited four-year institution with Bachelor’s degree within last 20 years
(4) Is currently working full time in a field of profession
×Special consideration will be given to men who were brought up under disadvantaged circumstances such as: Single Parent Home, Low Income, First-generation college student, and attended a predominately White Institution (51% of student population was White). All others will also be considered.

If you or anyone you know is aware of any African American men who fit these requirements and would be willing to participate in this research project, please forward this email to them along with my contact information: email address robinsonag@tntemple.edu and cell phone number 903-570-4924. If you have any questions or need more details, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your help in identifying individuals for this important study.
Mentor for the purpose of this study is a person who offers his or her expertise to a student with the agreed-upon goal of having the student grow and develop specific competencies (Murray, 1991). While there may be only limited interaction between the mentor and protégé, mentoring could encompass any one of four key components: 1) it provides emotional and/or psychological support, 2) it is a relationship focused on achievement, 3) there is role modeling, and 4) there is direct interaction with the protégé (Jacobi, 1991, p. 513). Mentoring can be formal or informal. This study assumes both are important and have an impact on the intended protégé.
APPENDIX F

COMMUNICATION WITH WILLIAM

E. SEDLACEK
Anthony- Please modify the survey as you wish citing the source reference- I am attaching a few references that may be of interest- good luck on your study and please let me know if you have more questions and I would like to hear of your results- Bill

William E. Sedlacek  
Professor Emeritus  
College of Education  
University of Maryland  
P.O. Box 539  
Great Cacapon, WV 25422-0539
Website [http://williamsedlacek.info/](http://williamsedlacek.info/)
Thought for today [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/SedCal/](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/SedCal/)

From: Anthony Robinson [arobinsonjr@me.com]  
Sent: Thursday, December 13, 2012 12:09 PM  
To: William E. Sedlacek  
Subject: Survey Use

Dr. Sedlacek,

Good morning. My name is Anthony Robinson Jr. I am a PhD candidate at Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga. I am studying the subject: Successful African American Men in College who received mentoring while in school.

I would like to use the survey you developed in your book "Beyond the Big Test." However, since my participants are graduates I will need to use past tense verb references in the survey. Therefore, (1) may I use your survey in my research? and (2) may I use past tense verbs where necessary?

Below is an overview of the program of which I am enrolled. Thank you for your attention.

Anthony Robinson Jr.
Director  
501.362.1181 O  
903.570.4924 C