PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES REGARDING FACTORS THAT SUPPORT SCHOOL SUCCESS

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By

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This dissertation follows the format and style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition except where superseded by directions from the Director of the Doctor of Education in Executive Educational Leadership Program at Houston Baptist University.
DEDICATION

Dametrius “Meechi” Clarkson, my angel, everything I have done and will do, is for you.

August 17, 1993- July 11, 2012

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents the King and Queen of love, humility, tenacity and habitual excellence. If not for your combined strength and fearlessness, nothing in my world would be possible. To my baby sister, born second but hooded first; what an outstanding role model you have been for individuality, hard work and perseverance. Mis hermanas, Emily & Julie where would I be without a couple of soul sisters that really get me. Te quiero mucho.
ABSTRACT


The purpose of this study was to examine African American male’s perceptions regarding factors that support school success. In doing so, it is important for the researcher to examine African American male’s perceptions regarding barriers to school success and their recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success. Participants for this study include a convenience sample of 30 high school graduates, from Title I high schools, currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution. All of the participants must be of African descent, identify African American, or they may be bi-racial and identify African American.

The research questions provided opportunity to further investigate what African American males perceive as supports for and barriers to school success. Also, the perceptions that African American males have regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success.

The emergent themes of this study indicate that the African American males that participated in this study consider a presence of a support system, mentorship, and positive role models to be the most crucial supports to school success. These supports aided them in overcoming what they considered barriers to their school success, which included negative or unstable environments, financial issues, and lack of support.
Key Words: African American males, achievement gap, African centered pedagogy, at risk, opportunity gap, post-secondary education, secondary education, school engagement, school success, student perceptions
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It is with great respect, admiration, and care I acknowledge the 30 participants in this study. Young men who have transcended all barriers to their academic success and only wish the same for those that follow behind them. Your stories are meaningful and moving and I am eternally grateful for the time you took to help me on this journey. I hope that I have done your stories justice.

I would like to take this opportunity to humbly acknowledge Dr. Dianne Reed. I thank you for your patience, guidance, and leadership through both my masters and doctoral degrees. I could only aspire to be half as wise, witty and well-dressed as you.

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To the leaders of the Girls Athletic Leadership Committee, my mini me’s, your commitment to leaving this world better than how you found it is all the fire one could ever need. Love, adoration, and pride is all that I have felt as I’ve watched each of you grow. May you all continue to empower, unite, and lead wherever you go and always remember to choose kindness. Never forget what you created and never forget, Mac girls made it happen. If you know, you know!

Coach Rod Davis, in pursuit of your purpose may you “awaken every dragon, every wolf, and every monster that sleeps inside you and remind them what hell looks like when it wears the skin of a gentle human.” -Nikita Gill, Wild Embers
I humbly tilt my crown to you. #Takeyourthrone2019

Kenneth Maurice Bennett Jr., there are no words to explain what it means to be loved, encouraged, and revered by beautiful black man such as yourself. One that has made defying the odds standard, you are my person.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The persistent under-achievement of students especially those in high poverty urban schools have placed a large number of urban students at risk of school failure (Reyes, Gillock, Kobus, & Sanchez, 2000). The racial achievement gap, the persistent disparity between the performance between African American students and that of their Caucasian counterparts is one of the most obstinate and perplexing issues challenging American schools (Evans, 2005). When we set the achievement gap in the broader context of the experiences of these children as they are raised, it becomes abundantly clear that the issue transcends the classroom (Evans, 2005). Just as its origin supersedes the schools so too does its effects. Following this premise, it is our responsibility to study not just the presence of the achievement gap, but also contributing factors, various theories surrounding equalization, and that African American males continue to struggle in our nation’s public schools. These young men often battle against stereotypes labeling them as low-achieving, disadvantaged and unsalvageable (Cooper & Liou, 2007). As supported by the research of Tara Yosso and Daniel Solorzano’s (2006) work with Latino students; when students experience persistent school failure they tend to disengage from the learning process and educational pipeline altogether (Yosso & Solorzano, 2006). The burden then becomes that of society as the young citizens are asked to productively function in our communities. Statistics continue to grow showing that they have been increasingly unsuccessful, and with a growing percentage of jobs requiring a GED, high school diploma, or bachelor’s degree, the question becomes, how do we expect them to succeed? They have been failed in school, the best resource to teach them how to engage as a contributing member to society. Research conducted to facilitate a better learning environment for the students on the negative end of the racial
academic achievement gap contributes to the larger society. We must develop a responsibility to work in favor of the underserviced. Our responsibility must go further; it must drive us to higher standards nationally for all students, especially African American males.

It is the primary goal of the researcher to answer the following question: What are the factors or supports that high school African American males perceive most positively impact their school success? While more people can be enlightened into the plight of African American males in our educational pipeline, what would be most beneficial is material that can transform how this group receives education. Sharing the sentiment of Richard Delgado, there are stories, those of scholars of color that deserve to be heard- they show us things about this world that we absolutely ought to know (Delgado, 1990).

Despite the efforts to minimize the racial achievement gap, millions of children especially African American males continue to struggle in our nation’s public schools. However, in various cities in this country there are schools that are educating African American males to a comparable level in relation to their counterparts. These institutions, those that are succeeding in servicing this population, are the institutions that must be observed with more intention. This research is timely and necessary as we take moment to see through the eyes of education’s lost and forgotten.

Houston Baptist University pledges to fulfill its renewal for renewal of Christian high education through a vision organized around ten pillars. Though several of the pillars are interwoven into this research, the application of pillar three: embracing the challenge of Christian graduate education will be discussed further. University leadership has taken up the charge of ensuring that Houston Baptist University produces inspiring leaders capable of being successful in today’s ever changing society. These leaders are meant to not only change the world
politically, socially, scientifically, and economically; but to also lead with Christian values. They are to spread the gospel of our Lord and savior through their discipleship, modeling the way of how leading with Christian values, while impacting progressive change.

Specifically the Graduate School at Houston Baptist University is committed to lifelong learning, providing new work place skills and responsibilities, and a life enhancing experience that impacts mind, body, and soul. Both the ideals of the university and the Graduate School align with this research because of the notion that we are to use our purpose in service. To engage in lifelong learning opportunities that will allow us to spread the message of the gospel and do our part in making this world a better place.

**Background of the Study**

“Endangered, uneducable, dysfunctional, and dangerous are many of the terms often used to characterize African American males” (Jackson & Moore III, 2006). The preceding direct quote from Jackson and Moore’s special edition piece in the Teachers College Record exemplifies the vested interest in this topic. The initial peak of interest in this study comes from experiences much vaster than that of the education pipeline. Along with an extensive personal narrative the research supports the disenfranchisement of African American males ages 18-30 as it is chronicled daily through various media outlets. For example, consider the work of Aminifu Harvey: 1 in every 3 young men between the ages of 20-29 is in prison or jail, on probation or parole (Harvey, 2004). In this country, there is an increase in the number of youth being tried and sentenced as adults. African Americans in the United States are imprisoned at 5 times the rate of the counterparts in apartheid South Africa. African Americans statistically represent fewer than 10 percent of drug abusers in Texas, yet African Americans make up 50 percent of all
prisoners incarcerated in state prisons for “drug delivery offenses” (Marable, 2008). These analytical statements along with many others can be found among the life work of Manning Marable, who has dedicated his life to the evaluation of the racism in the prison system.

Howard (2013), clearly articulates the sentiment when he concludes that, persistent failure in schools, by African American males, often leads to poor quality of life options. The primary problem is larger than the schoolhouse and the students that sit within its walls. However, it is the belief of the researcher that this nation’s schools can be used as a mighty tool in rectifying some of the nation’s chronic issues.

The issue is cyclical and has continued to oscillate over the last 200 years. African American’s have not experienced equal opportunity since their arrival here at this country’s inception. People in general, who do not earn adequate a living, live in poor neighborhoods; Poor neighborhoods tend to have subpar schools which provide subpar education. People with inadequate education are not afforded good jobs opportunities and therefore are unable to earn an adequate living. In 2003, Marable passionately theorizes about the future of black America, in his article he states “The average dysfunctional, poorly educated and violent child between 12-15 years old who is convicted of a crime and sentenced to ten years in an adult prison...will have as his role model an older, more sophisticated convicted criminal to help him develop during his formative years. And then he will be released back into the community, in his early to mid-twenties, at his peak of physical power, unsocialized, undereducated, and unemployable. He will be a model of the very person we, as society, wish to avoid.” (Marable, 2008) How can we stand by as our education system facilitates the production of individuals we wouldn’t want to encounter in our daily lives, literally unable to productively contribute to their communities?
Jackson and Moore (2006) write inspiringly about the inability of African American males to access high education opportunities because of their lack of achievement in K-12. They write under the subheading *endangered or ignored* which is very fitting as they look at the various points in a student's educational career and the characteristics found in students successful at those levels. They also address their findings of students that had gaps at the various levels (Jackson & Moore III, 2006). Tony Speed poignantly connects academic achievement disparities to economic and health dimensions. In summary, according to the Economic Policy Institute (2002), he articulates that poor academic achievement leads to poor employment opportunities. Often times if students are capable of obtaining employment they then subject themselves to diminished earning potential. Utilizing the work of Mensch and Kandel (1988), Speed states that those, in which the system has failed completely, high school dropouts, are more likely to use legal drugs, illegal drugs and engage in high risk behaviors such as unprotected sexual intercourse. These behaviors make these students more susceptible to infection and disease increasing mortality rates. Cross, Bazaron, Dennis and Isaacs (1989), concluded that educational attainments are a consistent and reliable predictor of health outcomes, including but not limited to mortality and disease infection rates. Armed with this information Speed argued that academic achievement disparities are not simply just a gap in achievement, but disparities to access of positive life outcomes including, economic and health dimensions (Speed, 2012). All of the preceding a testimony to the importance and necessity to better understand the remedies to the consistent and persistent racial achievement gap; felt most harshly by African American males.
Examples of Achievement Gap

As chronicled by the United States Department of Education’s annual report, African American males achieve at levels below their Asian-American and Caucasian counterparts as measured by traditional academic assessments. These indices would include; standardized tests, high school completion rates, grade point average (GPA), and college entrance and completion rates (Speed, 2012). The gap in Caucasian and African American science scale scores on comparable standardized testing was 36 percent points in 2015 up 1.6 percent from 2013. When it comes to another increasingly important content matter, mathematics, the gap was 26 percentage points in 2012 also up 1.6 percent from the analysis done two years prior (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

In 2007, the mean score on the SAT reasoning test, a popular college entrance exam, is a 1511. Caucasian test takers averaged a 1579 score while African American test takers averaged a 1287. If an 18 percent differential is not concerning enough, African American males score in very last place, their average score, a 1280 (United States Department of Education, 2009).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), indicates that the average GPA for Caucasian high school graduates was 3.05 on a 4.0 scale in 2005. African American graduates had an average GPA of 2.69 on a 4.0 scale. This is lower than the average GPA of both Asian-American and Hispanic graduates (Rooney, et al., 2006).

Increase in African American Males Classified At-Risk

African American males are continuing to dropout at one of the highest rates in the country (Davis L., 2008). According to the National Center of Educational Statistics in 2015, the dropout rate for all races was 5.9 percent, 5.0 percent for white males, and 6.4 percent for African American males. While African American males have experienced an increase in the
overall high school graduation rates; they still experience significantly lower completion rates in comparison to their counterparts. Annual reports from the American Council in Education (2012), find that African American students are less like to take rigorous or upper level courses. African American male students spend more time in special education and less time in honors or college preparatory courses.

Improving the academic achievements of African-American students, specifically males, on traditional academic measures continues to be a conundrum for educators. However, doing so is critical in ensuring positive life outcomes of this population (Speed, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

In almost every benchmark, African American males across the nation are falling behind academically (Hampton, 2015; Tyre, 2008). The term itself, academic achievement gap, portrays the underlying sentiment of most about racial disparities in achievement. Here the onus focuses on African American males’ underachievement and places the burden on these students to catch up to their peers (Speed, 2012). Higher likelihood of unemployment, low wage employment, and diminished earning potential are just a few of the realities that come with persistent disparities.

(Caspi, Moffitt, Silva, & Wright, 1998; Hepburn & White, 1990; Speed, 2012)

The purpose of this study was to examine African American males’ perceptions regarding factors that support school success. For the purpose of this research, factors that support success are defined as those that foster academic excellence in African American males in at-risk areas, with minimal disparity to the achievement of the Caucasian counterparts. Jackson and Moore (2006) argue that education today is more important now than at any other time in American history. In support, they state that education determines, significantly, the degree of social mobility one has or will have in American society (Jackson & Moore III, 2006).
The research in this area is both limited and disjointed (Davis L., 2008); the proposed study will be an earnest attempt to provide insight into the school experiences of African American males. In addition, the primary objective is to better service African American males in their venture through school systems in which they have found themselves disenfranchised. The research will differ from much of the research that has already been conducted because it will focus on the student’s perception on varying ingenuities in their success: rather than the assumed value derived by statistical representations. This is in contrast to the preponderance of literature that is associated with the negative aspects of African American male school success (Davis L., 2008).

Concerned with the disproportionate number of African American males served in special education classrooms, Patterson (2005), studied interventions for increasing positive outcomes for African American males. Through her studies she concluded that students showed improvement with intervention strategies like guided notes. This is an example of the current research in this topic area, mostly focused on classroom strategies rather than campus-based supports.

Another piece of research that served as a catalyst was the work of Tyrone Howard (2013). Through his findings, he concludes something so powerful; African American males are cognizant of how teachers and school administrators perceived them because of their race. Most importantly he concluded, that all researchers that would like to disrupt the failures of African American males from low income backgrounds, should have race, class and gender at the center of their studies (Howard, 2013). In practice, there is a large focus on the instructional strategies used with students in at-risk populations, what would result if we delve deeper into the self-perceived needs of each subpopulation?
African American males receive more disciplinary suspensions and expulsions than any other group in United States schools (Hampton, 2015). In 2004, a study found that for United States public schools, although African American males make up nearly nine percent of public school enrollment they apprise 23 percent of school suspensions and 22 percent of school expulsions (Varlas, 2005). According to Zeiderber and Schiraldi (2002), Darenshourg and Perez state that 52 percent of African American males who do not complete high school have been incarcerated at least once by the age of 30. Furthermore, 68 percent of male prison inmates did not graduate from high school, 35 percent of those citing behavior, academic problems and academic disengagement as the main factors for not obtaining their high school diploma (Darensbourg & Perez, 2010). Situational variables include; harsher discipline practices, being taught by underprepared teachers, being referred for special education services and feeling a detachment to school support the school to prison pipeline theory. (Darensbourg & Perez, 2010; Skiba & Petterson, 1999; Skiba, Petterson, & Williams, 1997; Skiba, et al., 2006)

This research aimed to closely examine areas where this is not the plight of the young African American male and to synthesize methodology in which practitioners can replicate. Considering the many facets of academic achievement, the research focused on grades, graduation, standardized testing and career and college readiness as a means of determining success. This study examined academically successful African American males and their perceptions of the supports for and barriers to school success. Then synthesized how these supports can be recreated to help African American males across the nation to experience school success.
Statement of the Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this study was to examine African American males’ perceptions regarding factors that support school success. In addition, it is important for the researcher to examine African American males’ perceptions regarding barriers to school success and their recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success.

African American males throughout the course of the educational pipeline are more likely to lag behind both their African American female and white male counterparts (Jackson & Moore III, 2006). Meier, Stewart, and England (1998) have written that African American males are more likely than any other group to be suspended or expelled from school (Meier, Stewart, & England, 1998). They are also more likely to be underrepresented in GT, but over identified in special education programming (Johnson, 2013). Elementary aged African American males are twice more likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability and placed in special education classes (Hampton, 2015; Tyre, 2008).

The proposed research is necessary on a macro level because, if as a nation, we continue to inadequately prepare this particular demographic we will be leaving generations with severe education incompetence. This could ultimately threaten the nation’s social and economic stability. President Obama echoed the statement stating; “These outcomes are troubling and they represent only a portion of the social and economic cost to our nation when the full potential of so many boys and young men is left unrealized.” (Office of the Press Secretary, 2014, p.1)

At the conclusion of her study in 2011, Natasha Moon cited the following notion on which this research can relate. If American schools are going to be successful in reducing and eventually closing the achievement gap more research needs to be conducted on schools in which the gap is decreasing; highlighting the components of schools that are successful in addressing
and closing the achievement gap between African American male youth and their white counterparts (Moon, 2011). Natasha Moon simply states the problem at the beginning of her conclusions, stating that a continual achievement gap based on race is a troubling social justice issue that merits attention and debate (Moon, 2011).

The findings of this study may benefit educational practitioners through the examination and description of supports for school success which may include (changes in the delivery of course content, opportunities to increase student engagement, participation in extracurricular activities, organizations, and clubs). It is expected that educational work in Texas will have profound ramifications nationally, because in many ways, the demographic trends in Texas predetermine those in many other states (THECB, 2008). As Dr. Steve Murdock, the former state demographer of Texas and now the director of the U. S. Census Bureau stated: “As Texas goes, so goes the nation” (THECB, 2008, p.1).

**Research Questions**

In qualitative research Boeree (2002) stressed the notion that phenomena, when analyzed speak for themselves, meaning that the researcher should be prepared to listen without bias. In this study the researcher describes the perceptions of African American males regarding factors that impact school success. The research questions that guided this study include the following:

1. What are African American males’ perceptions regarding supports that positively impact school success?

2. What are African American males’ perceptions regarding barriers to school success?

3. What are the perceptions of African American males regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success?
Definition of Terms

Academic Identity

How one looks at themselves academically with regards to their peers and their own academic success or failures (Hampton 2015).

Achievement Gap

This term describes instances when any subpopulation with comparative equivalent ability do not achieve at the same levels academically (Speed, 2012).

African-Centered Pedagogy

The Teacher incorporates African and African-American history into their lessons and therefore, brings about inclusion and allows for the celebration of ones' culture (Hampton 2015).

African American

Males that identify their race as African American which may include Black or Bi-racial students.

At-Risk

Traditionally at-risk communities have been defined as areas with low income, high crime rate and low high school graduation or career/college readiness. For the purpose of this study, secondary school will encompass grades 9-12 in a traditional, magnet or charter high school in the state of Texas.

Critical Race Consciousness

The theory or framework that explains the following, in the eyes of the oppressed, one's position in the social structure of race relations makes a qualitative difference in how one sees and experiences the world.

Educational Pipeline
The educational “pipeline”, an epithet of the compulsory education system in the United States, plays on the factory-like nature of our schools. This term is used a considerable amount throughout the literature and appeals to the sense that our schools are essentially an input, production process, output system (Sethna, 2011).

**Education Debt**

Term Ladson-Billings uses rather than achievement gap

**Institutionalized Bias**

A tendency for the procedures and practices of particular institutions to operate in ways which result in certain social groups being advantaged or favored and others being disadvantaged or devalued. (Oxford Reference)

**Opportunity Gap**

Refers to the ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students. (Glossary of Educational Reform)

**School Engagement**

Refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation that they have to learn and progress in their education. (Edglossary.org)

**School Success**

For the purpose of this study, acceptance into a post-secondary institution where the student is in progress or has completed a post-secondary degree.

**Social Identity Theory**
One’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s).

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is based on research of several researchers and authors; Murrell (2002), Kunjufu (2005), and Ladson Billings (2000). African-Centered Pedagogy is designed to empower the children of African diaspora that are underserved in the current educational system in the United States. Murrell's work, settled on the premise that the process systematically deprives African American children of knowledge of self and that this miseducation is root of several problems of masses of African American communities. Kunjufu maintains that contemporary problems of urban education stems from the failure to inoculate African American youth with Afrocentric values. Jawanza Kunjufu through his life work explores the importance of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy though African-centered methods as a way to increase the academic achievement and subsequently the school success of African American students. He often highlights the impact that such achievement would have on the community at large. Ginwright (2004), contends that low-performing urban schools that desire to make change in poor in working class communities should focus on African and African American contributions to history and culture. Further exploration of this framework including; exploration of the historical context that justifies the need for African-centered pedagogy, enhancing knowledge of self, and the power of cultural relevancy follows.

**Historical Context**

Africans were forced to immigrate to this country, first brought as slaves in 1619 to Jamestown Virginia, this, the beginning of a cycle of mistreatment and injustice for African Americans. Page and Witty (2010) write,
On the one hand, the present day black-white achievement gap most certainly has roots in the African American experiences along the historical continuum, beginning with slavery and continuing through the Black Codes, racial discrimination, and legally imposed separate but (un)equal educational opportunities. One cannot simply ignore this history and the lasting effects that it continues to have (pg. 94).

It could be argued then that any racial group that was not allowed to speak their own language, read, learn English, marry or practice their own religion would suffer the same educational and economic fate. Ilandus Hampton asks several questions about the plight and fate of African Americans after their arrival to the "New World", one of the most relevant questions reads; is it possible that African Americans allow the past experiences of slavery, Jim Crow segregation and oppression to shape who they are today? Kunjufu (1988), argued that mental slavery is more sophisticated, because when the chains are removed from the ankles and the wrists and placed around the mind, it becomes more difficult of the oppressed to recognize the source of their plight.

While legal slavery and segregation is over, the mental effects are still present to this day. There has been no proper remedy therefore we experience the achievement gap, the opportunity gap, high dropout and retention rates and drastic gaps in the reading capabilities.

**Enhancing knowledge of self**

This framework focuses on the importance of identity development, helping to mitigate the disconnect between the identity of African American males and their cultural backgrounds. Since the Brown versus the Board of Education ruling that separate was in fact not equal, the
educational underachievement of African American children has been seen as the inevitable outcome of how democracy, capitalism and opportunity are instituted in America (Merry & New, 2008). In this model of thought, African Americans are viewed as victims incapable of directing and realizing their own desires. Proponents believe that even institutionalized racism and unfavorable economic circumstances cannot determine one’s purpose and direction if there is a strong cultural base, placing the history, culture and life experiences of individuals of African descent at the center of everything that they do (Merry & New, 2008).

Afrocentric scholars believe that when we teach African American students about where they come from, they will be able to know who they are, know their history; and therefore, they will be able to go forward in the future to increase their own expectations for themselves and future generations. When individuals have a sense of who they are and know where they come from, they are able to see the good in themselves and overall, just do better (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; McMillian, 2003).

**Cultural Relevancy**

A great number of teachers who work with children of color come from Caucasian, middle class backgrounds and thus, often times are disconnected with their students. "Educators are not likely to develop a pedagogical knowledge base of the critical aspects of class and culture for nonmainstream minority-group learners unless a theory is developed that addresses how these students make sense of the curriculum in the context of their unique racial, ethnic, cultural, and political identities (Murrell, 1999 p.82)

Ilandus Hampton, an African American male, writes in his policy reform document that as an African American male he often felt culturally disconnected in his school classrooms where the teachers did not share his background. He shares a story in which he was asked to
recount his family vacation for an English assignment. This task proved to be very difficult and caused a severe amount of anxiety, because as many others in his neighborhood his family could not afford a family vacation. Furthermore, after recounted his family cookout, a considerably shorter essay than those who may have experienced a family getaway, he received a low grade. According to Gloria Ladson-Billings, Hampton (2015) argued that teachers create conditions for effective learning when they recognize the importance of culture and weave their students' cultures into their teaching: without exhibiting such cultural sensitivity, students can often become resistant to learning (Hampton, 2015).

**Limitations**

Limitations in research are matters and occurrences that arise in a study, which are out of the researcher’s control. Therefore, the limitations of this study is as follows:

The survey used for self-reporting may not determine conclusively the perceptions of African American males regarding supports for and barriers to school success. African American males in other regions of the nation and different high schools may have different perceptions regarding supports for and barriers to school success based on their individual circumstances and life experiences.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations in research are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). These boundaries are conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions made during the development of the study. Therefore, the delimitations of the study are as follows:

1. The participants in this study were African American males who successfully graduated high school and are enrolled in a postsecondary institution.
2. The survey used in this study is a self-report measure and no observable practices will be examined.

3. The sample of African American males may not be representative of the general population of African American males enrolled in postsecondary institutions.

**Assumptions**

The general assumptions of this study are:

1. The survey used in this study was valid for the purpose intended.

2. The participants understood the survey and responded objectively and honestly.

3. The interpretations of the data collected reflected what the participants intended.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose and significance, research questions, definition of terms, theoretical framework, limitations, delimitations, assumptions and organization of the study. In Chapter II, the researcher provides a review of literature including: the education of African Americans throughout history, and the education of African American males today, which is divided into supports for and barriers to school success. In Chapter III, the researcher describes the methodology used in this study which includes research design, participants, context and setting, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. In Chapter IV, the researcher provides the findings of the study. In Chapter V, the researcher provides discussions, implications, recommendations and conclusions.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most literature on the school performance of African American males has focused on the deficit view of African American males by depicting them as “dumb, deprived, dangerous deviant and disturbed” (Davis L., 2008, p. 27). It is imperative, for the sake of this research, that we delve deeper into the context and circumstances that surround underachievement by African American males, as well as factors that support school success. As education is considered essential to economic and social prosperity, the disparity in performance has drawn the attention of invested parties (Gill, 1992). Ogbu (1978) attributed much of African American males’ failure in school to the expansive failure experienced by them throughout the educational pipeline.

The purpose of this study was to examine African American males’ perceptions regarding factors that support school success. In addition, it is important for the researcher to examine African American males’ perceptions regarding barriers to school success and their recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success.

Review of literature, synthesis of perceptions and impactful discourse is needed to improve the way education is delivered and the advancement of African American males in today’s society. In this chapter the following topics will be discussed: the education of African Americans throughout history, and the education of African American males today, which is divided into supports for and barriers to school success.
The Education of African Americans throughout History

Education is essentially economic, social and political capital. Thus drawing the attention of those interested in the advancement of this country’s African American population, are the continuing difficulties experienced by African American males in school (Davis L., 2008).

Richard Delgado wrote for the Virginia Law Review in 1990 and oppositional piece focused on the voice of the oppressed. He argued that racism plays a large and powerful role in our nation’s history and that it is ever present, evolving, and still impactful. Delgado argued that an attitude of racism was adopted during slavery to justify the oppression and import of African Americans for labor. He continues that subordination of African Americans was to exceedingly useful physically and economically to let go after slavery ended (Delgado, 1990). Delgado references what he dubs the Law of Racial Thermodynamics: Racism is neither created nor destroyed and realizing that racism has different disguises explains much of the difference between those that believe in its impact and those who find it less substantial in modern day. He persists to argue that substantive racism treats African Americans as if they are actually inferior to whites and shamefully builds into the law and media things that echo and perpetuate the sentiment. As examples, he cites, Jim Crow laws, separate but equal doctrine and immigration policies; items that are all exceptionally relevant today. The researcher goes further to cite media examples like Aunt Jemima which portray an eagerness of African Americans to serve Caucasians or the dissemination of primitive and bestial images of African Americans which supports the need to be subjugated. Finally, in his reflective piece, Delgado describes what he refers to as procedural cast.

Ladson-Billings (2006), argued that the achievement gap between African Americans and their Caucasian counterparts should be expected. She starts with the prohibition of education to
African Americans during slavery, then goes on to cite that the purpose of freedom schools was yet in still to maintain a servant class. African Americans that attended schools during the subsequent Jim Crow period that were provided cast-off textbooks and materials, hand me downs from white schools. Ladson-Billings writes that scholars in the history of education have long documented the educational inequalities and inequities in the United States and therefore, the gap in achievement should be expected.

**Institutionalized Bias**

Institutionalized bias is a tendency for the procedures and practices of particular institutions to operate in ways which result in certain social groups being advantaged or favored and others being disadvantaged or devalued (Oxford Reference).

Although, Brown v. Board of Education legally ended educational segregation, it did not attend to the essential disparities in power innate society where Caucasians were in control (Fuller, 2004). Through institutionalized racism in all parts of society, especially in the education system, the United States continues to contribute to the academic achievement gap (Robertson, 2008). Toldson (2008), suggests that African Americans do not enroll in school with disadvantage, rather they leave school disadvantaged by institutionalized racism that is seamlessly embedded in the fabric of the United States. Inner city schools, for example, are poorly funded, maintain little parental and community involvement, and African American males who attend these schools are at risk for decreased achievement (Davis J. E., 2003).

Tony Speed (2012) states that the opportunity gap, speaks to the long history of exclusion and low expectations, addressing the reality that African American students generally have less access or less opportunity to access to the tangibles that catalyze high academic achievement. An example of this could be what Ladson-Billings describes as cultural capital, arguing that African
American students are not equipped with essential skills that could have a positive impact on
their navigation through American schools.

**Dehumanization of the African American Male/ Dissemination of Negative Perceptions**

In 1932, Robert Daniel studied the differences between the personalities of delinquent
and non-delinquent African American males. His conclusions on the differences in character and
personality traits suggest that delinquent boys have tendencies toward poor socialization,
conflicts at home, abnormal and excessive anger, and morbid depression.

In 1941, Federick Watts studied two groups of African American boys in an attempt to
test his theory on the causes of juvenile delinquency (Davis L., 2008). Watts postulated that the
causes of juvenile delinquency were “low intelligence, emotional instability, psychopathic
personality, and poor home and environment conditions (Watts, 1941). Utilizing one group of
African American boys from a home established for delinquent boys and another of non-
delinquent African American boys from the District of Columbia Public Schools, Watts
concluded that; there is no significant difference in the mental ability, emotional stability or
social maturity. He did find however, there is a difference in the interests, habits and attitudes of
the two groups. Through further examination of his demographic surveys, Watts also concluded
that delinquent boys experienced less parental control than non-delinquent.

According to authors such as Gibbs (1988), Holland (1998), Gordon, Gordon and
Nebhard (1994) and Garbibaldi (1992), LeRoy Davis wrote about the plight of the African
American males and their current existence in what he called “crisis mode”. He references the
literature that refers to African American males as an endangered species, an epidemic of failure,
and institutional decimation. Davis also references completed research that has identified what
the aforementioned scholars deemed discriminatory practices within our nations’ schools. These
practices specifically target African American males and negatively impact their academic achievement.

Stereotypes of African American intellectual inferiority are reinforced by past and present disparities in performance this causes teachers to underestimate the potential of these children (Ferguson A. A., 2000). In 2002, Webb-Johnson contented that African American children are often stigmatized by their teachers who do not understand the learning styles of African American learners, especially males (Davis L., 2008). She continued the teachers do not understand how to respond to the behavioral components that vary from the norms of public school.

Goff (2014) states that children in most societies are considered to be in a distinct group with characteristics such as innocence and the need for protection. Their research found that black boys can been seen responsible for their actions at an age of ten when white boys still benefit from the assumption that children are essentially innocent (Goff, et al., 2014). Their study also involves 264 mostly white female undergraduate students from large public universities across the nation. Here they had students rate the innocence of people ranging in age from infant to 25. The students judged children up to nine years old equally innocent regardless of race. Beginning at age ten however, they considered black children significantly less innocent than other children in every age group (Goff, et al., 2014).

**Education and African American Males Today**

**Race in the Context of School Performance**

Schab (1971) concluded at the completion of his study of attitudinal difference between African American and Caucasian boys, that African American boys indicated that good grades were important to them. He found that more African American boys wished to make honor roll
in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts. The group of males used in this particular study also reported that their parents were strict on them at a rate twice as high as the Caucasian males in this study.

Ogbu (1998), writes to explain the racial stratification as it pertains to academic achievement, he argued that in some cases African American students simply choose not to perform well. Ogbu furthers, African Americans choose not to work hard in an effort to quell dissonance about expending efforts for lacking rewards. This phenomena, cultural opposition theory, is two-fold; First, African Americans inhabit the bottom rungs of a caste like society, as described by W.E.B Dubois, they are expected to work as hard as their white peers for fewer rewards. Secondly, African Americans, especially males, underachieve in academic settings as to not “act white”, a concept Ogbo explores extensively throughout his research. From what they have seen and experienced, African Americans equate academic achievement and success with acting white. He furthers, contending that since minority students equate academic achievement and success with acting white and students that are perceived as acting white are excluded from social interactions that many African American youths, particularly African American males oppose academic achievement and subsequently choose conformity to traditional stereotypes (Ogbo & Simmons, 1998).

Ladson-Billings’ (2006) thesis, which is supported by various researchers that among them include Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata, and Williamson (2002), explains that the differences in the achievement outcomes between African American males and their white peers are related to the historical denial of resources rather than intellectual capacities. She goes on to describe these resources as cultural, economic, and intellectual capital withheld through institutionalized slavery, Jim Crow Laws, and presently through more subtle forms institutionalized racism in
school context (Speed, 2012). This is how, what Ladson-Billings calls the education debt rather than the achievement gap, was created and continues to grow.

Tony Speed subsequently cites Christopher Knaus (2007), as a support to findings asserting that not only do the vast majority of African American students attend low performing schools that tend to focus primarily on discipline rather than academics, but even the African American students enrolled in high-performing schools have limited access to college prep curriculum. African American students are tracked into remedial courses or labeled with a learning, emotional or behavioral disability of sorts.

**School Failure among African American Males**

In 1937, George Outland conducted a study proposed to examine the educational attainment of boys. His groups, from 6 southern states, included 317 African American and Caucasian boys. The researcher also included a comparative group to measure the educational attainment of the boys as well as the relation to foreign countries. At the termination of his study Outland concluded three comprehensive statements. Two of which pertain particularly to this literature review. Outland concluded first that African American males have a lower average of formal schooling than both Caucasian and Foreign boys. Secondly, African American parents had lower education attainment than Caucasian and Foreign boys (Outland, 1937).

Jawanza Kunjufu (1985) asserts that African American males experience school failure as a result of (a) lack of on-going parental involvement, (b) African American males succumb to negative peer pressure, (c) lack of consistent nurturance and guidance, (d) teachers harbor low expectations, (e) teachers lack knowledge of learning styles of African American males, and (f) there is a lack of African American male teachers and role models (Davis L. , 2008).
Holland (1996) links the failure experienced in school by African American males to their involvement in at-risk, crime, and violent situations. It is his theory, that schools have failed to provide African American males with the technologically based educational tools that they need to survive in today’s world. Amongst these tools are literacy and computer proficiency (Holland, 1996).

Greene (2003) addresses comparatively the success of African American males in secondary and postsecondary education to their Caucasian counterparts. According to the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Greene states, 72 percent of Caucasian students enrolled in ninth grade in 2001 graduated from high school on schedule while only half of the African American peers achieved the same level. Thirty percent of Caucasian kindergarteners went on to graduate from college that same year, while only 16 percent of African American students went on to earn a bachelor’s degree; most of those students were female (Greene & Winters, 2003).

**Teacher Preparation and Expectations**

There is a significant body of literature (Ferguson, 1990; Missouri K-12 Task Force, 2002; Knaus, 2007) that points to the poor preparation and under education of teachers as a major contributor to the achievement disparities of African American students.

Haycock (1998), states African American males are likely to attend high schools that employ a greater proportion of teachers that hold provisional licenses, a majority of them instructing courses outside of their content area. Tony Speed citing Case and Katz, 1991 and Strayhorn, 2008, supports this stating African American males are nearly twice as likely to be assigned an ineffective teacher subsequently leaving the most vulnerable students to be taught by the least experienced teaching professionals (Speed, 2012).
Summarizing Irvine (1990) and Lipman (1995), Speed states that African American students often are subject to the negative impact of cultural misinterpretations of underprepared teachers. He exercises Irvine’s research stating that many times African American students are chastised by their teacher maybe even punished for presumably being inattentive and possibly insolent for doing things such as not maintaining constant eye contact with teachers. This becomes a problem when many African American parents have taught their children that looking authority figures in the eye actually is the insolent behavior, a defense, promoting protection and survival African Americans in American society. Here in this example, an African American student’s attempt to be compliant is interpreted as defiance and disengagement. Another example summarized from the work of Lipman, cites an African American student being suspended for 10 days because he wore his overalls unsnapped, a common fashion style. Similar fashion statements, ripped jeans, primarily worn by Caucasian students go unpunished (Speed, 2012). These cultural misinterpretations punish African American students for not culturally assimilating. These misinterpretations directly impact the underachievement of African American students, as these students clearly cannot afford to be further discouraged or to miss additional days from their already poorly delivered education.

Stereotype threat is the fear that a person’s own behavior may confirm a negative stereotype about their specific group (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006). The literature goes on to describe stereotype type threat which deals with the way teachers view students and subsequently how students themselves. This theory presumes that teachers’ low expectations for minority students, specifically African American males are based on the student’s current performance rather than their potential to perform (Kober, 2001). Evidence, including the work of Kober (2001) and Varlas (2005), exists to support the notions that teacher’s expectations and
perceptions have a direct impact on the academic achievement of African American males and other minority students. Schools that consistently grow their students academically hold expectations for all students that match. Schools where African American students are consistently left behind hold reservations that this population of students is somehow deficient, incapable of learning (Speed, 2012). Teachers subsequently give and most importantly students receive education in this manner.

Cohen et al. (2006), argue that African American students, on average, experience higher level of stress in school because they are substantially aware that if they are unable to perform it will confirm the disparaging and negative stereotypes held by many authority figures in school about the intellectual ability of African Americans. Another impact of stereotype threat is that students rather be seen as lazy opposed to being seen as unintelligent after putting effort in completing an assignment of poor academic quality (Speed, 2012). Also supported by the research of Kunjufu (2001), trying and failing on an assignment, in this thought, is worse than not trying at all. This fear and stress of failure, due to the already negative perceptions of teachers has become oppressive in the academic achievement of African American males.

In his section on the achievement gap, Robert Evans (2005), declares that even students in suburban high performing district experience different treatment and expectations. He asserts that these students in middle class African American homes despite their ample resources still exhibit an observable gap in their achievement. The author deems this unmistakable proof from the way that students are treated and taught in school (Evans, 2005). The author continues on to say that teachers expect both too little from African American students and provide too little support, failing to address the individual differences and needs that influence learning styles, motivation and behavior. Evans offers this solution in reframing the achievement gap for the
success of African American students; Teachers must build personal relationships with students that communicates a consistent message of high expectations for achievement along with commitment to help students reach attainable goals. In summation of his own research Evans assesses that schools that are successful in servicing high poverty and underachieving students, to the furthest extent possible, remove the impacts and influences of the world outside of the school. They believe in a “no blaming, no excuses” methodology, citing that if they do not work to raise the expectations and achievement of at–risk students, who will? (Evans, 2005)

Critical Race Theory and Education

Critical Race Theory (CRT) addresses Caucasian dominance while it advocates for change and social justice. It urges counter narratives to deconstruct the dominant narratives and offers alternative views for understanding cultural identities while challenging master culture (Moon, 2011). The theory acknowledges the role of race and racism in the United States and investigates how institutional structures and practice, policies, and processes help uphold inequalities for students of color. According to Ladson-Billings (1998), the tenets of Critical Race Theory are as follows: Racism is endemic in the United States, Whiteness as property gives advantage in United States schools to Caucasian students, finally counter narratives represent a source of legitimate knowledge for people of color, specifically teachers and students of color, in naming their realities (Ladson-Billings G. , 1998).

Barriers to African American Male School Success

Poverty

Jonathan Kozol wrote in Savage Inequalities in 1991, a compilation of his experiences observing the disparity found in impoverished schools across the nation. He cited gross injustices
experienced daily by at-risk students in very poor communities. Below is a direct quote of Kozol retelling an encounter he shared with a young man in what is regarded as the best school in East St. Louis, IL.

…go and look into a toilet here if you would like to know what life is like for students in this city. Before I leave, I do as Christopher has asked and enter the boy’s bathroom. Four of the six toilets do not work. The toilet stalls, which are eaten away by red and brown corrosion, have no doors. The toilets have no seats. One has a rotted wooden stump. There are no paper towels and no soap. Near the door there is a loop of wire with an empty toilet-paper roll…

The excerpt from this text speaks volumes in the disparity of resources and how students are impacted greatly by living in and attending school in poverty. An equally important piece of his research that not only chronicles the poor condition is that his research also taps in to the mental or emotional aspect of these grave injustices. The author addresses that critics of the incapability of the school system in East St. Louis are conveniently ignoring the impact of the health and psychological conditions suffered in such third world living accommodations. He describes these accommodations as children living in burnt housing, playing on contaminated land and walking past acres of smoldering garbage in route to school (Kozol, 1991). When we talk about academic success, and that of African American males, we have to look at the impact of poverty as many African American males don’t just live in rather, they exist in and experience poverty. The author goes on to address that even with positive additions to these struggling schools’ things such as computers, textbooks or better materials for science labs; students would still be poisoned quite literally in their bodies and in their minds. The impact of poverty on
education is not purely academic, poverty is felt substantially in the lives of all stakeholders to the point where academic achievement is a mere afterthought.

The author, through his novel continues to touch on several of the issues and themes addressed this literature review. In an effort to streamline, I will summarize those portions of his research here as well. The first theme the author address as it relates to this review of literature is that of teacher preparedness. Kozol spoke to several building principals during the two years he spent in the nation's most disparaged schools. These men and women all convey the difficulty of attracting and retaining quality teachers. Kozol explains how districts, like Chicago Public Schools, move inadequate yet tenured teachers from campus to campus. These teachers generally lack the experience at the new grade level as well as the desire to adapt. Essentially dumping them on principals and leaving them to turn lemons into lemonade (57). Kozol also presents us with data, compiling that first short teachers and resources; Chicago Public Schools is also short substitute teachers. On an average morning in Chicago, 5,700 children in Chicago come to school and find they have no teacher (Kozol, 1991).

Another theme of which this author writes focuses on the disparity in education and resources between the haves and the have not. Kozol cites that the degree of equanimity in failure is so grand the most affluent parents of, Chicago proponents of school reform, school board presidents nor the prominent Daley mayoral family, have not sent their children to Chicago Public Schools in decades. The author quotes one of the city’s alder men directly when he states, “Nobody in his right mind would send [his] children to public school.” (65). The students that are left in school suffer from inadequate education, knowing that they are being dealt by law the bottom of the barrel and mentally to them the game is already over. The majority of these students that are left in Chicago Public School and other failing schools around
the nation, are poor minority children. According to Kozol, if a student enters freshman year not able to read chances are, they will leave just the same. Twenty-seven percent of high school graduates read at an eighth-grade level essentially graduating high school what he terms, marginal illiterates (71).

Ivory Toldson, has completed a considerable amount of his research on the impact of socioeconomic status, mainly poverty, on the academic achievement of minorities, specifically African American males. According to the United States Department of Education (2006), 30 percent of African American children under the age of 18 were living in poverty. Toldson (2008), through his study of the relationship between academic achievement and the annual household income of African American students, found that African American students with low academic achievement are more likely to eat junk food and less likely to eat healthy foods. The raw vegetables rich in enzymes, minerals and vitamins, the study argued, could improve brain functioning and reduces stressors (Ivory, 2008).

**Misidentification/ overrepresentation in special education**

Cultural mismatches between teachers and students alongside the natural inclination for teachers to misunderstand the behaviors of African American males positively impacts the referral and over identification for special education services furthering the underachievement of students (Howard, 2001).

Oakes and Wells (1998), argue that African American male students are disproportionately represented in remedial classes, overrepresented in special, vocational and general education programs, underrepresented in gifted and talented academic programs, and underrepresented in upper-level mathematics, science and computer classes. Their research
points to the relationship between the tracking of African American males into low-ability and special education classes and the academic achievement disparities (Speed, 2012).

In their work on cultural misinterpretations, Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson and Bridgest (2003), note that stylized movements, a core feature of African American culture, can indirectly impact special education referrals. In their work Neal et al., indicate that teachers perceive that students who walk with a stroll, a stylized movement, as lower in achievement and higher in aggression, and therefore more likely to need special education services (Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003).

**Lack of Parental Involvement and Nurturance**

In 1982, Alston and Williams conducted a study to determine if there was a relationship between self-concept, school performance and the absence of the father from the home. The researchers studied closely the relationship between the students’ self-concept, socioeconomic status and their grade point average. The pair deduced that the father-son relationship facilitated the adoption of adequate self-concept in boys who were able to model after their fathers. They noted that boys whose fathers were present in the household had a significantly higher and more positive self-concept and subsequently a higher grade point average (Alston & Williams, 1982). Davis (2003) argued that as parental involvement decreases African American males become increasingly involved with their peer groups. Now instead of the support in rewarding, punishing and motivating that Hrabowski, Maton & Greif (1998) found essential to the success of this subgroup, they are instead experiencing greater peer pressure. Peer pressure is not necessarily negative but according to Kunjufu (1985), it has reached negative proportions in school. Harris and Duhon (1999) chronicle that many African American males fail purposely in school to avoid ridicule from the peers and maintain masculine status. Playing on one's desire to be accepted and
fit in, incessantly, failure in school for African American males in their sought-out groups binds them together in a sense of belonging and shared experience (Davis, 2003).

The research of Toldson, et al. (2008), as summarized by Tony Speed, suggests that parent-child interactions are the most telling predictor of African American student success. Mandara (2006), supports this contention that when African American parents are actively involved in their sons’ academic effort they increase the odds of their sons succeeding in school. Further, Martinez (2004) argued that parents of African Americans, along with other racial minorities, may not know how to involve themselves in their child’s education (Speed, 2012).

**Impact of the Media/ Self-Concept and Academic Achievement**

Sciara wrote in 1972 as a summary of his studies in awareness and self-concept that Negro children in general, especially African American boys need to be provided the opportunity to view themselves in a positive light. He concluded that the impact of slavery and racism would take years to overcome if not addressed directly as seen in movements such as “Black is Beautiful” or the purposeful study of African Americans to American society. It was during this time that self-concept was increasingly studied and researchers reported a direct relationship between self-concept and academic achievement (Davis L. , 2008).

In 2006, Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, and Master explore the social- psychological intervention to reducing the racial achievement gap. This study first highlights self-integrity, seeing oneself has good, virtuous, and efficacious, as a fundamental human motivation. Membership is a social group maintains as a major source of an individuals’ sense of self- integrity. Subsequently, negative categorizations of one’s group of membership can be deemed threatening (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006). If people are required to consistently perform under persistently negative situations this can create a chronic stress that will consequently effect performance.
In 2012, author and Professor Lisa Delpit wrote *Multiplication is for white people*, an urgent, reflective and paradigm shifting book that focuses on the last fifteen years of educational reform and its impact on urban public education. The book encompassing several themes of this literature review is pertinent to this research as it draws attention to the subsequent views held by minority children and parents who often are left with the least and worst that education has to offer. The three themes that will be addressed here are as follows; self-concept and perceptions, school failure and the culture that is associated with academic achievement in at-risk populations.

First, self-concept, Delpit refers to the consistent differentiation of between African Americans and Caucasians in identical situations, a smog that masks unexamined belief systems. This “racism smog” is breathed in so often that one cannot determine which sentiments are derived from experience and which are perpetuated stereotypes toted from the days of slavery. Delpit writes, that as a result of this smog, many of our children have internalized all of the negative stereotypes deep-rooted in society’s view of African Americans. She goes on further to tie this internalization to behavior. She explains that when students begin to doubt their own competences, they revert to two behaviors, they hide or they act out to prevent the scenario in which they will be seen as “less than” from unfolding (Delpit, 2012). Unfortunately, these behaviors are often interpreted as negative character flaws, instead of cries for help.

Second, school Failure, traditionally and inherently schools are continuing to fail African American students and most specifically African American males. From the onset of her book, Delpit, states that in fact, there is no achievement gap at birth. She cites that because societal perceptions of the culture of poverty and hardships teachers and administrators see black faces and expect less. The tendency, Delpit, explains is to teach less, teach down, or to teach for
remediation; thinking that poor children in violent communities, living without fathers are not expected to be able to do much. The sentiment is twisted so much that some educators think, that when they expect less it is actually to the benefit of those students.

Finally, Delpit discusses what, through her research, she deems necessities if African American students are to experience academic success. Delpit advocates that educators strive to create classrooms that speak to African American students’ strengths rather than hammering them with their weaknesses. She suggests building connections to cultures and communities and recognizing their brilliance by teaching more content not less. She also suggests providing African American urban children with emotional ego strength to challenge societal views of their own competence and worthiness. Based on the work of Asa Hillard and other African centered scholars, Delpit urges that it is the role of the teacher to appeal to the intellect, humanity, and spirituality of his or her students (Delpit, 2012).

**Positive Supports Associated with African American Males and School Success**

A plethora of scholars including Cooper and Jordan (2003) and Pedro Noguera (2001) argue that in order to address the historical and social school experiences of African American male’s teachers and schools must do the following: First, they must play a vital role in motivation by emphasizing the importance of schooling. Secondly, they must impart on these students’ high expectations and demanding that failure is not an option. Finally, they much provide skills to help African American males become independent, critical thinkers (Speed, 2012). As summarized by Tony Speed (2012), Floyd (1996) in her study of the resiliency phenomena, considered 20 academically successful African American twelfth grade students from high poverty areas. Ten of these who were female, the other ten males. Her primary instrumentation being interviews, she identified the following life factors to be shared among this group. Her
results show that these students have a supportive nurturing family and home environments, they interact with committed, concerned teachers and adults, and maintain two key personality traits; perseverance and optimism.

At this point in the review of literature, the focus will shift towards the supports associated with instances where despite the odd’s African American males in at-risk area have become academically successful.

**African American Male Identity**

Davis (2005) supported by Dwight McBride (2005), states that bravado and hyper masculinity are learned traits for African American males that cause this demographic to resist or reject academic success. In a solution orientated frame, he furthers that problematizing and rejecting these framings of gender performance are critical in rectifying academic achievement disparities. As it pertains to similar issues, Cohen et al. suggests self-affirmative exercises that allow students to reaffirm their beliefs and own personal identity. Psychological interventions, particularly those that improve self-esteem or those that deal with stereotype threat have bearing on knowledge acquisition and the academic achievement of African American males (Speed, 2012).

Lindsey and Nebbitt (2010), study the impact of resiliency on African American male achievement. Operating on the premise that resiliency entails maintaining functional competence in the face of risk, the researchers assert that resilient African American youth from highly stressed environments display the following positive characteristics. They are diverse and flexible, the have positive peer and adult interactions, they have high cognitive skills and the display resourcefulness in new situations. These are all qualities that have a positive impact on academic achievement and the narrowing of the academic achievement gap. Where the research
may fall short is the further examination of academic resiliency, particularly what that looks like with respect to African American males and moreover how to cultivate and nurture it (Speed, 2012).

Martin and Marsh (2006), reveal at the culmination of their study that there are five factors and personal characteristics that relate to high academic resiliency. Their research states that academic resiliency significantly influences several educational outcomes. These outcomes are as follows: enjoyment of schools, high self-esteem and participation in school endeavors. The characteristics that promote these outcomes and subsequently the academic achievement of African American males are control, low-anxiety, planning, persistence, and self-efficacy (Martin & Marsh, 2006).

**Summary**

In Chapter II, the literature review discussed: (a) the education of African American males throughout history; (b) the education of African American males today; (c) barriers to African American male school success; and (d) positive supports associated with African American male school success. . In Chapter III, the researcher describes the methodology used in this study which includes research design, participants, context and setting, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. In Chapter IV, the researcher provides the findings of the study. In Chapter V, the researcher provides discussions, implications, recommendations and conclusions.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Improving the academic achievement of African American males in gate-keeping academic indices continues to be a significant dilemma for professionals in the field of education (Speed, 2012). The ability to do so, however, is critical in ensuring positive life outcomes for this population and subsequently all those that rely on their capacity. Accessibility to an equitable education is the right of every student; the United States, unfortunately, has not lived up to its obligation to all students, especially African American males, in providing them with the skills needed to successfully compete in global economy (Moon, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to examine African American males’ perceptions regarding factors that support school success. There are three questions that guided this research: (1) What are the African American males’ perceptions regarding supports that positively impact school success, (2) What are African American males’ perceptions regarding barriers to school success, and (3) What are the perceptions of African American males’ regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success? Again, the findings of these research questions could contribute to conversations geared to improving the academic achievement of African American males. In doing so, aiding in the narrowing of the achievement gap which reflects in the disparities in life outcomes.

These research questions include a broad range of factors and experiences that have influenced, framed, and shaped these academically high-achieving African American males’ in high at-risk areas that have managed school success. The research design for this study will require a qualitative method in order to accurately chronicle and convey the perceptions of the participants. Utilizing these methods rich responses to the research questions will unfold. This
chapter, which focuses on research design, is organized into five sections: (a) context and setting, (b) selection of participants, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis.

**Research Design**

If African American male youth continue to suffer disparities in academic achievement, the economic cost may ensure a future of second class citizenship and perpetuate a cycle of poverty, discrimination, and below average earnings (Olneck, 2005). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use the qualitative research methodology, phenomenology, to explore and appropriately describe the crux of how African American males perceive supports for their school success. Phenomenology instructs the researcher to allow the phenomenon to reveal itself in fullness. According to Lichtman (1996), phenomenological research approaches study the actual experience of people regarding a certain phenomenon. Phenomenology shares the goal of other qualitative research customs to understand how individuals construct their own reality. Here, the researcher is intimately coupled with the phenomena being studied (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Therefore, the researcher in this instance must be open minded toward a changing reality (Patenotte, 2016). In order to properly compile and navigate the vast educational experiences of African American males and their perceptions of their academic journey, the qualitative portion of this study, the participant short response questions, provided voice to the perceived supports for and barriers to school success in the eyes of African American males.

**Context and Setting**

The setting of this study was determined, by the location of the post-secondary institutions of each of the participants. For the purpose of this study, the African American males surveyed completed high school and then continued their academic careers in three states throughout the United States. These institutions are located in Texas, Louisiana, & Missouri.
According to the United States Census Bureau’s 2016 data, there are 25 million people in the state of Texas. Twelve (12.6) percent of those identify as African American or Black and subsequently five percent are African American males. The Census Bureau also reports 20.4 percent of African American males in Texas live below the poverty line as compared to 15.9 percent for the entire state. Low socio-economic status is a characteristic utilized in determining high at-risk populations in education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). United States News and World Report ranks Texas 37th as it pertains to state wide education. This includes Pre-K-12 education and higher education.

Louisiana is another southern state in the United States, it is home to over four and half million people. Of these 32.6 percent are African American, with 14.7 percent identified as African American males. Twenty (20.2) percent of the state’s population lives below the poverty line, while 32.4 percent of all African American males live below the poverty line. As it pertains to state wide education, the state of Louisiana ranks 49th amongst all 50 states for Pre-K-12 and higher education (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

In a slight shift to the Midwest, the state of Missouri is home to nearly six million people. Of these 11.6 percent are African American, with 5.5 percent identified as African American males. Fourteen percent of the state’s population lives below the poverty line, while 24.9 percent of all African American males live below the poverty line. As it pertains to state wide education, the state of Missouri ranks 25th for Pre-K-12 and higher education (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

Selection of Participants

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use the qualitative research methodology, phenomenology, to explore and appropriately describe the crux of how African
American males perceive supports for their school success. As the purpose of this study is focused on uncovering the perceptions of African American males’ as it relates to positive supports for school success and then conversely barriers to school success. Therefore, the target population for this study was African American males that are currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution. While the students that were selected for the study had to meet a specific set of criteria, several students were sampled in order to identify if they meet the criteria set forth by the research. A convenient purposive sample was collected then radiated outward utilizing the snowball effect. Participants that met the criteria were able identify other eligible participants. This also provided comparative data that can be used to generalize the data collected as well as inspire suggestions for future research.

According to Bogden and Biklen (2003, p. 65), “The method of sampling in analytic induction is purposeful sampling. The researcher may choose particular subject to include because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory.” Gall, Gall, and Borg (2006) subsequently stated that the purpose in selecting participants in purposeful sampling “is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied. A related purpose often is to discover or test theories” (p. 165). In this case the preceding research supports the researcher’s choice to utilize participants who qualified for the study to discover other eligible participants, known as the snowball effect.

Participants of this study met the following criteria; male, identify as African American, shown success in academic achievement as measured against the national average GPA and standardize testing scores, enrolled in a post-secondary institution, and at-risk by any measure including, low socioeconomic status, reception of special education services, and/or low
educational attainment of their parents (Dropout Reduction: Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery, 2009).

The instruments developed for the study is further described in the next section.

**Instrumentation**

This study utilized a demographic questionnaire and short response questions. The second portion of this study focuses closely on the experiences of African American males providing them the opportunity to expand further on their educational experience through open ended response survey questions. A request was submitted to Dr. LeRoy Davis in order to modify his rendition of Demographic Questionnaire and The Student Perception/Education Survey (Appendix A). These are the measures he utilized during his doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas- Austin titled Self-Determination in context: An Examination of factors that influence school performance among African American Males in High School (2008).

The Demographics Questionnaire is designed to gain insight on the backgrounds of the participants. The opportunity to examine trends or differences between the selected participants and their academic counter parts is crucial to the research. The questionnaire will be used to identify; gender, race, parental educational background, participant educational background, and which educational programs they were currently enrolled (Appendix B).

The “Participant Short Response Questions” (Appendix C) were be administered to academically high-achieving African American males’ in high at-risk areas that have managed school success. The young men present in the sample have met the following criteria; academically high achieving as determined by GPA and standardized testing scores, enrollment in a post-secondary institution, 18 years of age or older, and classified at-risk by any measure including, low socioeconomic status, reception of special education services, and/or low
educational attainment of their parents (Dropout Reduction: Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery, 2009). The intent of the short response questions was to further explore the unique circumstance and values that African American males endure and maintain in the context of their school performance.

**Data Collection**

A request to conduct this study and to use human participants was submitted the Institutional Research Board of Houston Baptist University. The completed Human Participants Form was submitted to the Office of Research to properly obtain approval from the University to sample its students through its varying academic departments.

Ethical contemplations for the proposed study include protecting the identities of the participants and obtaining their permissions. Each participant was administered a letter of consent which must be signed before proceeding with the process (Appendix D). Participants will be notified that their participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw at any time (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). It is an essential in research to minimize bias, as it pertains to this study, the researcher intended to minimize bias by only intervening with the participants after initial contact when electronically communicating with participants that were asked to complete the short response questions.

Data was collected through an online administration of the Demographic Survey and Participant Short Responses Questions, and open forum for the target population to expand on their experiences. Because the collected responses reflect the personal views and circumstances of participants, the research will take every possible precaution to protect and maintain the identity of participants including their secondary institution. Participants were notified that the collected data will be stored in a secure file cabinet and secure electronic storage in a secure
office to which only the researcher has access. Data will be kept for three years after the completion of this research project and then it will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

In Educational Research: An Introduction, 2007, Gall, Gall, & Borg define both bias and observer bias, respectively as follows: a set to perceive events or other phenomena in such a way that certain facts are habitually, overlooked, distorted, or falsified. Observer personal bias refers to errors in observational data that are traceable to personal characteristics of specific observers (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The researcher is a high school Assistant Principal at a Title I school in southeast Texas, a former high school science educator and coach, and of African descent. Therefore, the researcher exercised extreme caution, refraining from impressing career experience and personal sentiment upon participants. In order to fully achieve this, all participant responses were recorded verbatim.

This section describes the data analysis procedures used to disaggregate both the demographic survey and participant short response questions. The study employed a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. The analysis involved similarities, coding and categorizing, and constant comparison as suggested by Lunenburg and Irby (2008). The responses of the African American males that participated in this study to each survey question were analyzed in accordance with the research question it was meant to address. The open-ended responses, submitted through online survey and housed in an electronic excel format provided clarity on the perceptions African American males have regarding supports for and barriers to school success. It also identified recommendations for increasing the probability of school success for African American males. Coding is defined as a method of data analysis in qualitative research in which segments of data are assigned to one or more categories (Gall, Gall,
& Borg, 2007). By reviewing each survey response, the research accurately analyzed the data collected in both the demographic survey and participant short answer response questions. Collections of substantial statements were organized into emergent themes that were separated according to being identified by the participant as a support for, barrier to, or recommendation.

**Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher presented the specific methodology for the study. While the sample that will be used is one of convenience, the participant criteria is specific based on the needs of the study. The demographic survey and short response sections that will be used to record the data from participants are described in the instrumentation section. From the described methodology the researcher endeavored to gain accurate and generalizable information on the perceptions of African American males as it pertains to the factors that support school success and then subsequently those that operate as barriers to school success. Data was analyzed utilizing qualitative research methods. Findings will be presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings of this phenomenological study, utilizing qualitative research methodology, are provided. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of African American males regarding factors that support school success. Across the nation in almost every benchmark African American males are falling behind academically, trailing each and every one of their counterparts including African American females. To re-iterate, African American males throughout the course of the educational pipeline are more likely to lag behind both their African American female and white male counterparts (Jackson & Moore III, 2006). Meier, Stewart, and England (1998) have written that African American males are more likely than any other group to be suspended or expelled from school (Meier, Stewart, & England, 1998). They are also more likely to be underrepresented in GT, but over identified in special education programming (Johnson, 2013). In an effort to better understand instances where African American males have found academic success despite the plight of others in their demographic; this study sought to uncover perceptions of African American males in regard to their perspective of supports for and barriers to school success. Three questions guided this research, they are as follows:

1. What are African American males’ perceptions regarding supports that positively impact school success?

2. What are African American males’ perceptions regarding barriers to school success?

3. What are the perceptions of African American males regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success?
Description of Participants

The young men present in the sample for this study met the following criteria; academically high achieving as determined by GPA and standardized testing scores, enrollment in a post-secondary institution, 18 years of age or older, and classified at-risk by any measure including, low socioeconomic status, reception of special education services, and/or low educational attainment of their parents (Dropout Reduction: Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery, 2009). The demographics and characteristics of the participants of this study are as follows. This study included 30 male participants, 29 who identified as African American and one as bi-racial. Eleven participants indicated they lived with both parents during high school, 11 with their mother, six with family members other than their parents, finally two participants indicated they lived with their father during high school. Twelve of the participants were the first in their families to attend college. The educational achievements of their parents are as follows: 15 of the participants indicated their mothers were high school graduates, five received a bachelor’s degree, four completed an associate’s degree, four hold a professional or graduate degree, one completed junior high, and one participant stated the academic achievement level of their mother was unknown. As it pertains to their fathers: 16 of the participants indicated their fathers were high school graduates, four received a bachelor’s degree, four completed an associate’s degree, four hold a professional or graduate degree, one completed junior high, and one participant states the academic achievement level of their father was unknown. As it pertains to the academic experience of the participants in the study: 15 participants indicated they took advanced placement (AP) courses, nine were enrolled in Honors courses, eight in dual credit (DC) courses, and three participants partook in International Baccalaureate (IB) courses while in high school. Participants also gave demographic information about their extra-curricular
activities. Of the 30 participants, 21 indicated that they participated in athletics of some sort including: basket-ball, football, baseball, and track. Five of the participants were in fine arts related organizations such as band and choir, six participated in community service and mentorship programs, and six participated in academic or leadership activities such as Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), National Honor Society (NHS), and Student Council. Finally, three of the participants took part in major school programs, for example Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC).

**Research Question One: Supports**

Research question one explored perceptions regarding supports that positively impact school success. Participants responded to two open ended survey questions, their written responses were analyzed for emergent themes. The researcher uncovered three major themes. The emergent themes included; a support system, mentorship, and positive male role models. There were three minor, less prominent, themes that also emerged. Included in that group were; self-motivation, stable home environment, drive and determination.

**Support Systems**

One third of all participants emphasized the crucial role their support system played in their school success in high school. One of the main roles of the support system was to continually encourage them, especially when things became difficult. When asked “What do you think are some reasons some African American males experience academic success?” participant number 23 responded: “They have a support system to help them resolve any problem that may come to him. Those who may encircle a young African American man, constituting his support system in this study, ranged from his parents and siblings, his grandparents, his friends, his teachers & his coaches. For example, another participant explained that when his parents were
unavailable to him his coaches stood as his support system. They held high standards and in the words of participant number 17, “They did not allow me to fail even when I had moments I wanted to quit on myself!”

**Mentorship**

The second theme for supports for school success was mentorship. In this research, siblings, aunts & uncles, friends and coaches were all cited as mentors who had a positive impact on the academic achievement of the participants of this study. Participants stressed the importance of having a mentor to guide them through their secondary careers. Participant number 3 stated, “I believe the mentors that motivate African American male students play a significant role in their ability to be successful.” He continues, “Sometimes just knowing someone believes in you, will push you to be your best, and will help you navigate the often-complex educational system is all you need to be successful.”

Participants of this study expressed that their experiences with positive outreach from active mentors who modeled the proper ways to deal with their circumstance, as often times they have had to do it themselves, encouraged them greatly. To quote participant number 5, “Mentors are individuals who take time out of their day to guide you and are genuinely concerned with the development of the students around them.”

**Positive Male Role Models**

Making the entire premise of this research ironic, participants stated that the presence and accessibility of positive male role models was a major component in their school success. Participants stated that these positive representations combated the negativity and peer pressure that surrounded them in their neighborhood. In some cases, simply seeing someone that looks as they do or who rose from similar circumstance persevering to excellence had a major impact on
the school success of the participants of this study. As it pertains to the participants of this study positive role models included; fathers or father figures, teachers, and once again coaches. When asked “What do you think are some reasons why some African American males have successful school experiences?” participant number 4 responded concisely, “They have role models like them that inspire them to be great.”

**Self-Motivation**

Five participants in the study highlighted self-motivation as an integral piece in the school success of African American males. Participant number 16 responded that alongside a supportive parent or guardian, and a mentor; he feels, students that are hard workers, value success and are self-motivated will experience school success. Three of the five participants that cited self-motivation mentioned being motivated due to the struggles and negative experiences of their family. Participant number 28 expressed that some students witness their family struggle and are motivated from within to obtain a better life. Participant number 29 stated “The more I was exposed to positivity I wanted more and better for myself. I used the negative exposure as motivation to propel me to the next level.” Participant number 30 indicated that the negative stereotypes motivates African American males to strive for better opportunities.

**Drive and Determination**

Three participants in the study voiced that they felt drive and determination was an important support for African American males to experience school success. One participant indicated that amongst family assistance, faith, friends, and finances to finish school, the drive not quit was a critical piece to the school success of African American males. Another, participant number 27, responded, “I would have to say determination, and knowing that the African American man has to work twice as hard than most races.”
Stable Home Environment

When asked “What do you think are some reasons why some African American males have successful school experiences?” three participants of this study indicated that a stable home environment was important. A fourth, participant number 25, was slightly more specific stating a “financially” steady household.

Research Question Two: Barriers

Research question two explored the perceptions regarding barriers to school success. Participants responded to two open ended survey questions, their written responses were analyzed for emergent themes. First participants were asked what they thought were some of the reasons that some African American males have unsuccessful school experiences. The second question asked participants to explain some of the challenges they faced in high school and how they responded to those challenges. The researcher uncovered three major themes; as it pertains to the barriers to school success that African American males face the emergent themes included; environment, financial issues, and lack of support. There were three minor, less prominent, themes that also emerged, these include; mindset, influence of peers, and parental involvement.

Environment

As it pertains to barriers to school success, eight of the thirty participants stated that the environment could have a negative impact on the school success of African American males. Participants responded noting the household environment or the community environment. Their concerns were of the instability of and the negative influences that can be present in either of these environments. Participants used various terms or phases to express this challenge. Participant number 14 responded that a difficult home life was a barrier to school success. Aligned with the previous response, participant number 23 cited family issues. One step further
participant number 25 added unsteady living environment. Participant number 27 stated that he believed family distractions to be a barrier to school success.

**Financial Issues**

Seven of the thirty participants of the study responded that they believed issues with finances were a barrier to the school success of African American males. When asked “What do you think are some of the reasons some African American males are unsuccessful in school?” Participant number 15 simply stated “finances”. Participants 19 & 21 both state that alongside lack of focus, finances are a primary reason. Participant number 16 stated that limited resources due to low socioeconomic status contributed to the unsuccessful school experience of African American males. Participant number 8 responded “Some struggle due to socioeconomic reasons; which in many cases leads to limited experiences and opportunities.”

When asked specifically “what are some of the challenges you faced in high school and how did you handle those challenges?” Five of the thirty participants cited that they experienced financial issues while in high school. To the aforementioned question, participant number 15 responded “Racism, going to bed hungry, and anger.” Another, participant number 18 responded “My family experienced financial hardships during this time and we were losing everything; it took an emotional toll on us at first, but I used that to motivate me to be successful.”

**Lack of Support**

Six of the thirty participants stated they believed that some African American males were not successful in school due to lack of support. When asked, “What do you think are some of the reasons some African American males are unsuccessful in school?” Participant number 1 said concisely, “No support system.” Participant number 7 responded, “I believe that African Americans who have unsuccessful school experiences may not have a support system at home
and/or at school.” Also, very concise and alongside lack of effort participant number 9 stated “No support system”. Participant number 26 responded, “They don’t have a good support system and are scared of achieving more than the ones who came before them.” Participant 30 responded, “I believe lack of support and resources.”

**Mindset**

Seven of the thirty participants responded that they believed mindset including lack of self-confidence, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-motivation, and lack of self-discipline all acted as barriers to school success for African American males. Participant number 5 believed that among several other things, being stigmatized into certain categories could contribute to the unsuccessful experiences of African American males. Participant number 4 responded, “In some cases nobody understands them or takes the time to get to know them and already counts them out.”

**Peers**

Five of the thirty participants answered, in some capacity, that peers were one of the reasons some African American males had an unsuccessful school experience. Participant number 10 said “hanging with the wrong crowd”. Participant number 13 responded, easily influenced by others”. Participant number 27 answered that along with family distractions, peer pressure was a barrier to school success for some African American males. Participant number 29 believes that alongside the lack of support from family, teachers, and coaches, the lack of support from peers can negatively impact the school success of African American males. When asked about people who have positively impacted his academic career, participant number 15 credits his friend, alongside his aunt and mentor with challenging him to “aim for the stars and not to settle.”
Parental Involvement

Three of the thirty participants referenced parental involvement in their responses. When asked, “What do you think are some of the reasons some African American males are unsuccessful in school?” Participant number 11 responded “broken household, neither of their parents are around.” Participant number 17 stated “lack of discipline/ parental involvement.” When asked about people who have positively impacted their academic career eight participants mentioned their parents, five their mother, and three their father.

Research Question Three: Recommendations

Research question three explored the perceptions of African American males regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success. Participants responded to three open ended survey questions, the responses in this section are organized by to whom the advice was directed. The survey questions administered are as follows: First, what advice would you offer other African American males as it pertains to becoming academically successful? The second, what advice would you offer me, the researcher, in assisting other African American males to be academically successful? Finally, what advice would you offer high schools to increase the school success of African American males?

Advice for African American Males

There was one major and overarching theme that emerged from the responses of all participants. Strength in mental health is a suitable placement for all the variations of the participant responses. As if speaking directly to a young African American male struggling in school, participants gave responses that encouraged self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, focus and perseverance.
Perseverance

Seven of the thirty participants encouraged African American males to persevere including statements like, “stay the course” and continue to “push through”. Participant number 14 stated “Never give up, having some form of education is everything. Participant number said, “Never give up or let anyone tell you that you can’t do it.” Participant number 2 responded “stay the course. Being successful isn’t easy, if it was everyone would be at the top.” Finally, participant number 3 pleaded, “stay the course and don’t let others influence you to make negative choices.”

Focus

Six participants encouraged African American males to focus. Urging a combination of perseverance and focus participant number 7 stated, “You have to push yourself, you must stay focused, and never give up.” Participant number 10 reminded, “Stay focused on your goals.” Participants number 19 & 26 both added, “Remain focused on the end goal.” Finally, participant number 24 recommended, “stay focused, don’t let anything slow you down, and be able to say no.”

Strength in Mental Health

Five participants shared the importance of mental health in all aspects, this includes: self-respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Alongside this, the phrase “trust and believe in yourself” was repeated. Participant number 11 stated, “Always keep your faith, trust in yourself, and don’t ever let anyone tell you what you can’t do.” Participant number 22 encouraged “surround yourself with positivity.” Participant number 25 said, “Find your lane and stick to it. Have self-respect, esteem and confidence.” Participant number 30 responded, “Limitations live only in our minds. Have self-confidence and stop trying to fit in.” Participant number 28 offered,
“Don’t fear being your own person, respect yourself and your future enough to never let someone change who you are.”

**Advice for the Researcher**

The second question asked of participants, as it pertains to recommendations for school success, asked participants the advice they would offer the research in order to increase the school success of African American males. There were three themes that emerged from the responses to this question, these included: encouragement and support, building relationships, and finally, promoting and implementing opportunities for mentorship.

**Encouragement and Support**

Twelve of the thirty participants charged the researcher with encouraging and supporting African American males in school. Simply stated, participant number 7 said, “Remain supportive and encouraging.” Participant number 26 pleaded, “Please uplift them, but do not take it easy on them.” Participant number 28 responded, “Keep encouraging them, and letting them know that they are the example for their generation and future generations.” Participant number 30 added, “Support, inspire, and believe in them. Participant number 20 encouraged, “never give up on them and push them to be the greatest they can be.”

**Build Relationships**

Participants offered advice to the researcher about building relationships with students through listening to their stories and learning about the challenges that they face outside of school. Participant number 1 responded, “Be creative in finding ways to work around some of their problems inside and outside of school.” Participant number 2 stated, “Gain as much knowledge as you can on how an African American male can be raised and learn through his eyes the challenges that he faces.” Participant number 14 offered, “Listen to them and build a
relationship because they want to be heard and feel important.” Participant number 16 advised, “Learn how to connect with these students, probe their interest, instill confidence and be a motivator.” Participant number 17 stated, “once and African American male feels you have his best interest at heart they’ll go above and beyond for you. So be consistent, understanding and nonjudgmental in all situations.” Participant number 21 said, “Understand their life outside of school.” Participant number 16 offered, “Learn how to teach and reach African American male students. Learn how students learn, achieve, and think.”

**Mentorship**

Four of the thirty participants advised the researcher to promote and implement opportunities for mentorship. Participant number 3 said, “These young men need to connect with academically successful mentors.” Participant number 5 stated, “Show students how to find mentors that they can check in with at least once a week.” Participant number 27 offered, “Have more one on one time with them and have strong male mentors in place.”

**Advice for High Schools**

The third question, as it relates to recommendations, asked participants what advice they would offer to high schools to increase the school success of African American males. Many of the responses to this question mirrored the responses of the previous section. Participants discussed mechanisms for supporting African American students and building in opportunities for mentorship. The other responses to this question called for three additional items: increase in parent accountability, increase the number of African American males hired, and increase in academically based extracurricular activities.
Increase Parent Accountability

When asked what advice he would offer high schools to increase the school success of African American males, participant number 1 said, “make sure each of them has a trusted advocate and hold them as well as their parents accountable.” Participant number 14 responded, never give up on them and stay involved with their parent as much as possible.” Participant number 17 added, “Attempt more community outreach and increase parent involvement and accountability.”

Increase in African American males on Staff

Participant number 2 advised, “Hire more positive black men.” Participant number 3 offered, hire more staff that look like the students that they serve.” Participant number 16 responded, “Provide differentiated instruction that meets the needs of these students. Employ educators that resemble these students.” Finally, participant 27 exclaimed, “more African American male teachers!”

Increase Academically Based Extracurriculars

Participant number 6 stated, “Offer more clubs and programs for them to join that deal with academics. Participant number 13 said, “Offer more programs that engage them academically.” Participant 28 responded. “Increase after school programs that provide a means of transportation.”

Summary

Chapter IV outlined the findings of the study based on the responses provided by African American males who have experienced school success in high school. These young men have experienced school success despite one or more measures that qualify them as at-risk. The first research question explored the perceptions that African American males held on supports for
school success. The emergent themes included; a support system, mentorship, and positive male role models. There were three minor, less prominent, themes that also emerged. Included in that group were; self-motivation, stable home environment, drive and determination, and stable home environment. The second research question explored the perceptions that African American males held on barriers to school success. Here, there were three major themes, the emergent themes included: environment, financial issues, and lack of support. There were three minor, less prominent, themes that also emerged. These include; mindset, influence of peers, and parental involvement. The third and final question explored recommendations the participants had to increase the probability of school success for other African American males. Almost as if speaking directly to young African American males students themselves, participants encouraged self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, focus and perseverance. To the researcher the participants recommended: encouragement and support, building relationships, and promoting and implementing opportunities for mentorship. Finally, to the high school, among support and opportunities for mentorship, participants recommended an increase in parent accountability, increase the number of African American males hired, and increase in academically based extracurricular activities.

In Chapter V, the researcher delivers the discussion, implications, recommendations, and conclusions for the findings of this study.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the perceptions of African American males regarding factors that support and barriers against school success. For the purposes of this study, African American males are identified as males that, as it pertains to race, identify as African American or Bi-racial students. Nogera (2008), stated “culture is not static, individual responses to their environment cannot be easily be predicated. Both structural and cultural forces influences choice and actions, but neither had the power to act as the sole determinant of behavior.” It is sentiments such as these where the discussion and implications of this research find their importance. As supported by national data, we cannot predict we must hear their perspective, their voice. The methodology employed for this phenomenological study gave voice to 30 African American males whose educational experiences varied greatly, but despite the average national statistics for their particular demographic, they found educational success as determined by their enrollment in a post-secondary institution. The findings of this study addressed three research questions:

1. What are African American males’ perceptions regarding supports that positively impact school success?

2. What are African American males’ perceptions regarding barriers to school success?

3. What are the perceptions of African American males regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success?
A convenient purposive sample was collected then radiated outward utilizing the snowball effect. Participants that met the criteria were able identify other eligible participants. This also provided comparative data that can be used to generalize the data collected as well as inspire suggestions for future research. Purposive convenience sampling is a non-probability technique that is especially useful when randomization is impossible because the population is very large (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This study utilized a demographic questionnaire and short response questions. All participants completed both portions in their entirety providing them the opportunity to expand qualitatively on their initial demographic and statistical responses.

**Research Question One**

Research question one explored the supports that African American males perceive most positively impacted their academic success during high school.

**Support Systems.** Participants in this study emphasized that support systems played a crucial role in their success in high school. Most prominently by continually encouraging them when things became difficult. For example, participant 23, stated his support system aided him in resolving any problem that came to him so that he needn’t to it all by himself.

**Mentorship.** Participants in this study stressed the importance of having a mentor to guide them through their secondary careers. Mentors included various family members, friends, and coaches. One participant stated, for example, that mentors played a significant role in his ability to become successful and sometimes it is because they served as the sole person that believed in him.
Positive Role Models. Participants stated that the presence and accessibility of positive male role models was a major component in their school success. These positive representatives helped them combat negativity and peer pressure capable of overwhelming them.

Self-Motivation. Participants in this study highlighted self-motivation as an integral piece in their school success. The more exposure to positivity they felt the more they sought better for themselves. Participants also highlight utilizing negative experiences to push them in the appropriate direction.

Drive and Determination. Participants in this study stated that drive and determination are important supports in order to experience school success. The drive not to quit and the determination to work exponentially hard is a critical piece to ensure African American males venture the extra mile required to combat some of their circumstances.

Stable home environment. Participants of this study indicated a stable home environment, particularly, a financially steady household is an important support in achieving success in school for African American males.

Research Question Two

Research question two explored the perceptions regarding barriers to school success. The emergent themes included; environment, financial issues, and lack of support. There were three minor, less prominent, themes that also emerged. These include; mindset, influence of peers, and parental involvement.

Environment. Participants of this study stated that negative household or community environments could serve as a barrier to school success. These concerns of their surroundings ranged from negative influences in the community to familial distractions.
Financial Issues. Participants cited that finances and financial issues as a barrier to school success. For example, the lack of resources or socioeconomic issues could lead to limited experiences and opportunities, as one participant explained.

Lack of Support. Participants of this study stated, very concisely, a significant barrier to school success is a lack of support or support systems. These support systems serve to guide and redirect African American male students in time of need or hardship.

Mindset. Participants of this study stated an array of different negative mindsets serve as barriers to school success. Among these are: lack of self-confidence, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-motivation, and lack of self-discipline. The ability to realize self-worth and believe in their capacity is a luxury not all are afforded, therefore mindset can stand as a barrier to school success.

Peers. In one capacity or another, participants stated that the influence of peers is one of the barriers to school success for African American male students. The negative pressure and behavior can persuade students to respond inappropriately to both adversity and opportunity.

Parental Involvement. Participants cited their parents as people who positively impacted their school experiences. They stated the lack of parental involvement, a broken household, or the lack of one parent or the other could serve as a barrier to the school success of African American male students.

Research Question Three

Research question three explored the perceptions of African American males regarding recommendations for supports that may increase the probability of school success. Participants offered recommendations for African American males, the researcher, and high schools as it pertains to increasing the school success of African American males.
Advice for African American Males. Participants encouraged variations of self-respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Emergent themes included: perseverance, focus, and strength in mental health. In a variety of positive statements, participants encouraged African American males to persevere. Statements included items such as “push through” and “stay the course”. The volume of high impact quotes and encouragement is the evidence of the importance of the ability to persevere in school success. Participants encouraged students to stay focused: focused on the end goal despite things that may try to slow them down. Finally, participants offered advice to African American males in form of self-affirmations. These include: “trust and believe in yourself”, “limitations only live in the mind” and having enough self-confidence to not worry about fitting in.

Advice for the Researcher. As it pertains to advice for the researcher to increase the school success of African American males, the emergent themes of participant responses included: encouragement and support, building relationships, and promoting and implementing opportunities for mentorship. Participants charged the researcher to consistently remain encouraging and supportive. One participant pleaded “remain supportive”. Building relationships was another key piece the participants urged. Through listening and gaining a deeper understanding of African American male student’s experiences they felt the researcher could better assist students in their areas of need and in turn aid them in experiencing school success. Finally, mentorship, participants urged the researcher to promote and implement opportunities for mentorship. This would provide African American males a mechanism to experience people with their same backgrounds that have defied the daunting challenges they also face. Providing them a resource to help get them where they dream to go, though they are unsure how to get there.
**Advice for High Schools.** Though many of the participant’s responses mirrored those of the previous section in their other responses emergent themes included: increasing parent accountability, hiring African American males on staff, and increasing academically based extracurricular activities. Participants urged that high schools ensure each student has a trusted advocate that is held accountable. Next, participants encouraged high schools to employ educators that resemble the students that they serve. Finally, participants advocated for an increase in academically based extra curriculars; more programs that engage these students intellectually rather than solely the stigmatized athletic offerings.

**Implications**

In our current educational construct, like no other in the world, African American males are more likely to experience school failure, exclusionary discipline, underrepresentation in GT courses, yet over identification in special education courses. As a nation we are witnessing a great number of our schools fail its children, however, no demographic more than African American males. Natasha Moon (2011), reminds us of the urgency in conducting relevant research of those experiencing school success if we, in fact, want to close the achievement gap.

The findings of this study provided more information about African American males who were formally apart of these secondary constructs. Therefore, the information in this study may provide vectors to school success of African American males from several vantage points. Suggestions to implement for practice in meeting the needs of African American males in high school, and increasing the probability of school success include:

1. Provide opportunities for support through mentorship and increasing prominence of positive African American male role models.
2. Cultivate a school culture that promotes leadership, self-care, positive response to adversity, and offers stability and a sense of belonging.

3. Offer opportunities for parental and community involvement therefore, engaging all stakeholders in the success of the school.

4. Provide training to school personnel on building relationships and creating opportunities to support self-efficacy.

5. Promote academically based extra curriculars to support course work and build self-confidence, combatting the stigmas that surround African American male students.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the increasing educational debt, to which African American males are experiencing most significantly, it is important to continue to investigate supports for and barriers to their secondary school success. By conducting further research we have the ability to build and maintain communities of academic achievement and intentionally develop programming that addresses the needs of African American males in schools. Additional research recommendations include the following:

1. Investigate the intricacies of African American males who did not experience school success because they were significantly impacted by one or more barrier. Examine how those barriers can be mitigated.

2. Examine successful mentorship programs to provide implementable methods in schools struggling to serve this particular demographic of students.

3. Conduct more comprehensive studies that give positive voice to elementary and intermediate age African American males.
4. Examine the instructional practices of high performing schools where the educational debt does not mirror that of the nation as it pertains to African American males.

Concluding Remarks

This phenomenological research study investigated the perceptions of African American males in regard to supports for and barriers to school success. The findings of this study suggest that African American males that have experienced school success attribute their success to strong support systems, mentorship, and positive role models. These supports aided them in overcoming what they considered barriers to their school success which included negative or unstable environments, financial issues, and lack of support.

This study provided insight on the perceptions of African American males that have experienced school success by examining their experiences and the vital components of overcoming their perceived barriers. We must continue to gain actionable intel on promoting academic achievement and school success for African American male students. While the problem is not new, African American males are lagging behind their counter parts at an alarming rate. This problem is not only confined to the nation’s educational system, but it continues to radiate outward through society.

When participants of this study were asked about what contributed to their school success or why they felt some African American males were successful in school not one single participant mentioned instructional practices. This is contrary to most of the traditional training and focus in schools and teacher preparation programs. This must be addressed and utilized to support this demographic of students. We must ensure that students have the ability to receive a quality education and create opportunities for them to access high education; this must be intentional. All stakeholders must address this as an educational and societal charge with
implications that will affect everyone. Adams-King (2016), closes her research with the following: “As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated in his letter from Birmingham Jail, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”. Our educational system has egregiously failed African American males, and as this continues to go unrectified it is a vast injustice. An injustice we can no longer endure.
REFERENCES


http://www.doe.mass.edu/dropout/overview.html?section=riskfactors


http://ncced.gov/pubsearch/getpubcats.asp?sid=091#


APPENDICES

Appendix A - CITI Certificate
Appendix B - IRB Approval
Appendix C - Request to utilize and modify questionnaire
Appendix D – Participant Informed Consent
Appendix E – Demographic Survey
Appendix F - Participant Short Response Questions
APPENDIX A

CITI certificate

This is to certify that:

Akua Twumasi

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

- Human Subjects Research (HSR) (Curriculum Group)
- COEBS Graduate Students (Course Learner Group)
- 1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Houston Baptist University

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w1fc06b80-95ff-4084-8df6-5b51815af633-21596205
Date: November 15, 2017

To: Akua Twumasi

From: Institutional Review Board Committee

RE: Notification of IRB Action

Protocol Title: Perception of African American Males Regarding Factors that Support School Success

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed and APPROVED as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.

PLEASE NOTE:
Upon Approval, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the exempt application reviewed by the IRB which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent Forms (Information Sheet) and recruitment materials.

*Any* changes to the application may cause this project to require a different level of committee review.

Should any changes need to be made, please submit a Modification Form.

*Taiya Fabre*

Dr. Taiya Fabre

Chair, Institutional Review Board Committee
APPENDIX C

Request to utilize and modify questionnaire

Akua P. Twumasi, M.Ed.
21526 Lovis Way
Humble, TX
77338

July 1, 2017

Dr. Leroy Davis
1303 Quail Park Drive
Austin, TX 78758

Dear Dr. Davis,

It is with great honor that I write today you today, I sincerely hope this email finds you in good health and
spirits, of sound mind and heart. Please allow me to first take this opportunity to thank you for you
dissertation work on self-determination in the context of African American male school performance. As I
have begun working on a dissertation of my own, examining positive supports for African American male
school success, your work has been an integral piece for my studies. I have cited your work several times
throughout my literature review and worked extensively through your list of references. I’ve really enjoyed
your work! One of the things that has proven both helpful and has further built my capacity for
understanding was the survey that you administered to you participants. I am writing today to formally ask
your permission to utilize the applicable portions of your survey in my study. I would greatly appreciate your
support but in the event you would prefer I do not utilize it, I most respectfully understand. I am a student at
Houston Baptist University and can be reached via my school email address twumasiap@hbu.edu or via
USPS at the address listed above.
I thank you for your time thus far and also for the work you have dedicated your life to in service of young African American men.

Respectfully,

Akua P. Twumasi
APPENDIX D

Participant Informed Consent Form

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Akua Twumasi, Assistant Principal at MacArthur High School in Aldine ISD. I am also a doctoral student at Houston Baptist University. Under the direction of Program Director Dr. Dianne Reed of the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. Today, I humbly invite you to participate in my study, which centers student’s perceptions of supports to school success, for my dissertation for the Doctoral of Education Degree in Executive Educational Leadership from Houston Baptist University.

Your participation in completing this demographic survey and questionnaire is voluntary and you may choose to discontinue participation at any time. The purpose of my study is to examine student perceptions of supports for and barriers to school success. In addition, I will be looking to analyze and synthesize implementable practices for schools in order to better support the academic achievement of students in high at-risk areas.

I plan to publish the results of this study and, I ensure you, it will not include any information that would identify you or any members of your family. The information collected will be held confidential and there will be no linking identifiers. To keep this information safe, the digital survey results will remain password protected. Any data analysis will be completed on a secure computer and should it be necessary to print any survey results, printed copies will remain filed in a secure file cabinet in a locked office space accessible only by the researcher.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Akua P. Twumasi, MacArthur High School, 4400 Aldine Mail Rte Rd, Houston Texas, 77039. (281) 985-6346, twumasiap@hbu.edu.
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact Houston Baptist University, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Dianne Reed, 7502 Fondren Road, Houston, Texas, 77074. (281) 649-3035, dreed@hbu.edu.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Humbly,

Akua P. Twumasi, M.Ed.

Doctoral Student, Executive Educational Leadership, Houston Baptist University
My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study. I acknowledge that participation in this study is completely voluntary and I am aware that I may change my mind and withdraw at any time. I understand that my responses will be held confidential and used only to further this dissertation research. I further understand that I may contact the researcher, Akua P. Twumasi, should any questions arise.

My signature below indicates that I, ___________________________________, consent to participate in this study.

__________________________________________      ________________________________
Signature                Date
APPENDIX E

Demographic Survey

Directions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, all responses to this survey will be held confidential. Any questions that refer to the past tense as for an accurate recollection of your high school experience.

Participant email address: ________________________________

Name of post-secondary institution: ________________________________

Please place a circle around your choices

1. What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male

2. What is your race?
   a. Hispanic/ Latino
   b. African American/ Black
   c. White
   d. Asian/ Pacific Islander
   e. American Indian
   f. Bi racial/ Multi racial, please specify ________________________________
   g. Other, please specify ________________________________
3. Who did you live with during high school?
   a. Mother and Father
   b. Mother only
   c. Father only
   d. Other, please specify ______________________________

4. Select the highest level of education completed by your mother or female guardian
   a. Professional/Graduate School (Doctorate or Master’s degree)
   b. Bachelor’s Degree
   c. Associate’s Degree
   d. High School graduate
   e. Junior High School
   f. I do not know

5. Select the highest level of education completed by your father or male guardian
   a. Professional/Graduate School (Doctorate or Master’s degree)
   b. Bachelor’s Degree
   c. Associate’s Degree
   d. High School graduate
   e. Junior High School
   f. I do not know

6. Are you the first in your family to attend college?
7. Do you or have you ever qualified for free and reduced lunch?
   a. Yes
   b. No

8. Are you/Have you been enrolled in any of the following programs? (select all that apply)
   a. Advanced Placement (AP) courses
   b. Honors courses
   c. Dual Credit (DC)
   d. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
   e. International Baccalaureate (IB)

Please provide short written responses to each of the following questions

9. What is your current grade classification?

10. What is your highest composite ACT and/or SAT score?

11. What was your high school grade point average (GPA)?
12. What is your current GPA?

13. What activities do/ did you participate in school?
APPENDIX F

Participant Short Response Questions

Directions: The following short response questions are a follow up to the previous questionnaire you have answered for this study. Please descriptively answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Please remember all of your responses are confidential and only the researcher will be able to access identifying information. Also, as a participant of this study you have the opportunity to withdraw from this study at any time.

1. What do you think are some of the reasons some African American males have successful school experiences?

2. What do you think are some of the reasons some African American males have unsuccessful school experiences?

3. Name the people who have had the most influence on your academic career and how did they influence your academic success?

4. What are some challenges you faced in high school and how did you handle those challenges?

5. How do you solve your problems in your personal life? How do you solve problems at school?
6. Have you ever been referred to as a nerd, school boy, or any other derogatory term by other students?

7. What are your goals upon graduating from college? Do they differ from your goals immediately after high school?

8. What activities did you participate in during high school? What activities do you currently participate in at school or within the community?

9. What method(s) or approach(s) do you use to make decisions about your life?

10. What things or subject areas do you feel exceptionally good in?

11. What advice would you offer other African American males as it pertains to becoming academically successful?

12. What advice would you offer me, the researcher, in assisting other African American males to be academically successful?

13. What advice would you offer high schools to increase the school success of African American males?
14. Are there any other concluding comments you would like to share about your academic success?
Profile
A transformational and zealous leader grounded in humility, simplicity and self discipline; diligently preparing for the opportunity to serve in Athletic Services/ Programs. Focused on research and reflection in an effort to facilitate academic, athletic and social growth to students in under serviced populations, grooming each student for post secondary success.

Professional Experience
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT; HOUSTON, TX – 2015-PRESENT
Serve as the administrator in support of:

PE/ Athletics- support physical education and health teachers effectively implement curriculum. Maintain positive working relationships with all coaches focusing on personal growth and increasing student success. Created and implemented athletic rally/ summit to support female athletes.

Science- Focus on data driven instruction and assessment.

New Teacher Mentor Coordinator- create and execute applicable professional development for new teachers with a focus on support and retention.

Textbook coordinator

BIOLOGY TEACHER AND COACH, KLEIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT; HOUSTON, TX – 2012-2015
Pre-AP , On level, and Remedial Biology Teacher; JV Volleyball Coach

BIOLOGY TEACHER AND COACH, KANSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS; KANSAS CITY, MO – 2010-2012
JV Volleyball Coach; JV Girls Basketball Coach; Spirit Activities Chair

Education and Certifications
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO - Secondary Science Education- 2010

Houston Baptist University, Houston, TX- Master of Education Leadership- 2014

Houston Baptist University, Houston, TX- Doctor of Education, Executive Educational Leadership- May 2019

Administrative Certifications- Principal EC- 12

Teaching Certifications- Life Science 8-12; Special Education EC-12
Skills
Data-Driven Instruction; Effective Communication; Effective Management of People and Groups; Employee Retention; Curriculum and Instruction; Staff Development; Microsoft Excel, Word, Technology and Applications; Research and Program Evaluation

Affiliations and Memberships
Sigma Lambda Gamma National Multicultural Sorority Inc; Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education; American Volleyball Coaches Association; American Educational Research Association; National Science Teachers Association

References
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Aldine Independent School District- sdreed@aldineisd.org
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Julie Colhoff- Head Women’s Soccer Coach
Northern Illinois University- juliecolhoff@gmail.com
Heather Peterson- Principal
Aldine Independent School District- hmpeterson@aldineisd.org