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Racial Identity and Resilience in Black Male College Graduates

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Racial Identity and Resilience in Black Male College Graduates

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty at Governors State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Anancia Stafford

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to see if there was a relationship between Black male college graduates and non-graduates’ racial identity. This study also sought to see if there was a relationship between Black male college graduates and Black male non-graduates’ resilience. Black people were not always afforded the opportunity to attend higher education, but the civil rights movement assisted with the abolishment of unfair laws that supported exclusion and segregation in the educational system. Since then, college enrollment has increased for Black people in America in both PWIS and HBCUs, but there exists a large gap in college completion between Black males, other races and the opposite sex.

This is a problem because at times, education serves as a barrier to social-mobilization for Black men. Black men face many risk factors from America’s social political environment which has influenced negative self-esteem and identity. Studies have associated negative identity with impaired functioning in college, however, there are Black men who succeed and graduate college. Racial identity and college completion theorists stated that identity and resilience are associated with each other and are essential for Black males who are seeking to graduate college. Therefore, this quantitative study examined the racial identity and resilience of Black male college students who have completed college and who did not complete. Results showed that there was no significant relationship between neither racial identity or resilience between Black male College graduates and Black male non-graduates. Results are further discussed in later chapters
Chapter 1: Introduction

A college education is an opportunity for economic and social upward mobility and enhances career opportunities (Baum, Ma & Payea, 2013). Recipients of bachelor’s degrees can receive about one million dollars more than those with high school diplomas over their lifetime (Carnivale and Rose, 2011). Black Americans and other minorities were not always afforded the opportunity to obtain a college education in America (Bethel, 2013). After the civil rights movement, the opportunity to obtain a college degree extended to all races and minorities (Anderson, 2002; Karkouti, 2016). While Black Americans took advantage of this opportunity, the Journal of Black Education (2007) reported that Black men had a graduation rate of 43 percent from college, while White Americans had a 63 percent graduation rate at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) in 2006. Additionally, Black men tend to graduate at lower rates than Black women at Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs) (Gasman, 2013; Gasman, Wagner, Ransom & Bowman, 2010; Stayhorn, 2010). The number of undergraduate degrees earned by Black females in 2010 was 66% versus Black males 34% (Kim & Hargrove, 2014) and this is gap is not reflected in other racial groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The disparity in graduation rates for Black men exists at both PWIs and HBCUs in America.

There were many factors to consider for Black male college students’ attrition and retention rates in both PWIs and HBCUs. For example, PWI’s have intentionally or unintentionally isolated Black people through non-inclusive campus culture and values (Delgado & Stefanie, 2001; Rollock & Gilborne, 2011). Studies showed that feelings of isolation and non-inclusiveness experienced by some Black students led to lack of involvement in imperative functions such as seeking academic help, social emotional support, and learning financial aid resources, which were identified as tools that tend to help students graduate (Hargrove, 2014;
Morales, 2010). At HBCUs, students on average are accepted with lower academic GPAs, lower standardized test scores, and lower socio-economic statuses due to HBCUs’ historical mission to provide education to those who would be unlikely to receive it from PWI’s (Gasman, 2013; Palmer & Wood, 2012). Lack of academic preparedness and financial support was reported to be prevalent challenges and barriers to completion for Black males at HBCUs (Ezeala-Harrison, 2014; Richards & Awokoya, 2012; Xanthos, Treadwell, & Holden, 2010). At both HBCUs and PWIs, studies showed that women tended to have higher emotional intelligence than men, which allowed them to be able to use their emotions to handle stress from college (Walsh-Portillo, 2011; Castro-Johnson, & Wang, 2003). Based on the literature, both PWIs and HBCUs provide barriers that Black men face in effort to complete their college education (Hargrove, 2014; Shorette & Palmer, 2015). Goings (2016), stated that high achieving Black male college students faced the same barriers that underperforming Black male college students faced. Hargrove (2014) highlighted that while Black male students faced many barriers to their achievement, high achieving Black male students responded more effectively. In addition to the challenges presented in academia, the racial climate of America has had impactful influences on the experiences Black men (Delgado, 2001; Grissette-Banks, 2014; Mu’min, 2010).

In the historical context of race and culture in America, Black people have endured slavery, segregation, social injustice and many other types of disparities due to white supremacy and unfair laws (Dade, Taartakov, Hargrove, Leigh, 2015; Payne, 2014; Mu’min, 2010). Because Black Americans have been disproportionally exposed to risk factors such as economical struggles, limited resources, neighborhood violence, drug abuse and racism (Estrada et.al, 2012), Black people are hypothesized to develop maladaptive coping or pathology from such exposure (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). Negative environmental factors may negatively impact a Black persons’
functioning and ability to complete college (Bridges, 2010; Mu’min, 2010), however, not all Black people develop maladaptive ways of coping or become pathologized from their risk factors and drop out of school (Hubbard, 2001; Mu’min, 2010). Risk factors for Black male students (i.e. disadvantaged treatment based on race) are described as threats to overall wellbeing and the formation of protective factors (Seaton, Yip, Morgan-Lopez, Sellers, 2012). Protective factors (i.e. social support, family, self-esteem, problem solving skills) are personal attributes and sources of support that increase resilience (Welsh, 1989).

Resilience has been defined as the ability to thrive in the face of adversity, (Mu’uim, 2010). Resilience has also been defined as the positive adaptation and recovery process after an experienced stressor (Garmezy, 1974,1991; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker,2000; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2008). With regards to stressors for Black men, the Nigrescence racial identity theory explains that the stage of racial identity that a black person operates from can either bolster or inhibit resilience through environmental stressors (Cross 1971; 1991). Racial identity is defined as an individual's sense of having their identity defined by belonging to a particular race or ethnic group (Nugent, 2013). Other racial identity models such as the Race/Culture Identity Development Model (Morton & Sue,1998), Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001), and the Model of Black Identity development (Cross & Flagen, 2001) highlight how the external environment strongly influences Black males’ experiences and how he relates to others and himself within the environments context. Since there are many environmental stressors that Black men face at PWIs and HBCUs, resilience is an imperative component to completion.

College completion follows the successful attainment of the academic criteria set by the university. College completion theories from theorists such as Astin (1984, 1999), Tinto (1993), Padilla (1999) and Brown, Morning, and Watkins (2005), all suggested that in addition to
meeting academic standards of the university, an important component of college completion includes the personal demographics and culture of a person because it has a large impact on their performance and interaction with the college environment. Astin (1984, 1999) and Tinto (1993) addressed how involvement and connectedness to the college campus serve as strong predictors to college completion, however if the student has issues with connecting and becoming more involved in the college environment, they may be at risk of incompletion. Racial identity theories share the idea that depending on the stage or level of the identity of the Black male, Black males may feel very isolated and disconnected from their counterparts and society (Cross 1971; 1991; Morton & Sue, 1998; Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001), therefore, Black men would be at risk of incompletion in a college setting.

Theoretically, racial identity and cultural experiences of Black men play a major role in college completion (Hargrove, 2014; Mu’min, 2010). Because there are Black men who successfully complete college, based on resilience theories, racial identity theories, and college completion theories, there are factors that allow them to complete the task. Studies showed that positive racial identity positively correlated with resilience (Berwise, 2015; Hubbard, 2011; Mu’min, 2010; Chavous, Bernat, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone & Zimmerman, 2003) and resilience positively correlated with academic performance (Kim & Hargrove, 2013; Bethell, 2013). There is, however, a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between racial identity, resilience, and college completion for Black men.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is socioeconomic disparity in the Black American community (Farmer & Hairston, 2013; Payne, 2014; Robertson & Mason, 2008). Many Black Americans struggle with obtaining the social-mobility necessary to move from poverty, which often results in the passing down of
generational poverty (Williams, 1999). Earning a college education is likely to increase social mobility and provide financial stability for those who use their degrees in comparison to those who either do not use their degrees or do not have a degree (Baum, Ma & Payea, 2013; Rose, 2000). Black males experience some extenuating circumstances that contribute to high attrition rates in their pursuit to obtaining a college degree (Ezeala-Harrison, 2014; Richards & Awokoya, 2012; Xanthos, Treadwell, & Holden, 2010).

The bodies of literature that explore deficiencies are plentiful and provide insight into what inhibits Black men from being successful in college. However, literature that explores Black males who persevere through tense sociopolitical environments and cultural barriers that successfully obtain college degrees is scarce. The latter is important because identifying factors that may be associated with college completion for Black men may help prepare younger Black males who are college bound and provide intervention to college men who may be struggling with college persistence. Because of the racially charged history of Black people in America, racial identity is a relevant topic with regards to resilience (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). Neglecting to identify how racial identity relates to resilience and college completion only inhibits interventions that can properly address Black male disparity in college completion. The connection between how sociopolitical components impact Black males’ ability to socially and financially mobilize through the utilization of a college education has not received the necessary attention to address the issue.

**Purpose of study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the racial identity and resilience of Black males who graduated from a 4-year college, Historically Black University (HBCU), Predominately White Universities/Institutions (PWI), or Mixed) compared to racial identity and
resilience of Black males who attended a 4-year college (HBCU, PWI, or Mixed) but did not graduate while seeking a bachelor’s degree. Nugent (2013) stated that, “The strength of such identity [Racial Identity], is dependent on how much he or she has processed and internalized the sociological, political and other contextual factors within that group (p.1), and many studies purported that because Black people have experienced sociopolitical challenges in America, their racial identity may be negatively impacted, and may lead to poor academic performance (i.e. low G.P.A) and college discontinuation (Cross, 1991; Harper & Tuckman, 2006).

However, to examine Black male college students who persisted to graduation, this study aimed to provide literature that examined how racial identity, as measured by the Cross Racial Identity Scale, and resilience, as measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, compared between Black male college graduates and Black male college students who did not graduate. As previously mentioned, those with a college degree have better access to opportunities that help them increase their socio-economic status, and since there is a disparity in both college attainment and socio-economic status for Black American men, this study was also an attempt to begin academic conversation regarding ways to increase the amount of Black men who graduate in the future, thereby decreasing socioeconomic disparity. This study’s purpose was not to infer that all PWI’s have racial structures that perpetuate discriminatory environments toward Black males, and it was not to infer that HBCUs lack credibility in hosting quality students overall.

In addition, the purpose of this study was to utilize the results to inform future programs that intend to cultivate healthy racial identity and resilience for young black males. The programs were to be in workshop format and would target black male high school students in efforts to increase positive racial identity and help inform students of helpful ways to be resilient through adversity as they prepared for college. The intention was to utilize the workshops to bolster
factors that would contribute to persistence to graduation for Black males to address the college attrition disparity and socioeconomic disparity.

**Research Question**

1. Do Black males who have graduated from college have different racial identity and resilience in comparison to Black males who attended college but did not graduate?
2. What are the protective factors of Black men who have/have not completed college?

**Aims and Hypothesis**

Given the research questions, the aims of the present study were to:

1. To determine if Black males who graduated from college have different racial identity and different level of resilience than Black males who attended college and did not graduate.
2. To introduce literature regarding the racial identity and resilience of Black men who have successfully completed college.

Based on the literature, research questions and the study’s aims, it was hypothesized that:

1. **H1**: The mean scores on the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) will be a statistically significantly higher for Black male graduates than the mean scores for Black male non-graduates.
2. **H0**: The mean scores on the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) will not be statistically significantly higher for Black Males college graduates than Black males Non-Graduates.
3. **H2**: The mean scores on the Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale-10 (CD- RISC 10) will be a statistically significantly higher for Black male graduates than the mean scores for Black male non-graduates.
4. **H01**: The mean scores on the Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale-10 (CD- RISC 10) will not be statistically significantly higher for Black Males college graduates than Black males Non-Graduates

**Limitations**

Some limitations included gathering participants who did not complete college for the study. There were more college graduates that non-graduates who participated in the study, which may have been due to sampling methods. Another limitation included the lack of ability to control for socioeconomic status (SES) that the participants may come from, which is important because of the assumptions that financial burdens are an obstacle to completion. However, the researcher was able to collect data regarding participants’ current social economic status.

Some assumptions were that Black males interpret an intense sociopolitical and racial environment in America, which may not have been the case for all Black males. The researcher could not control for cultural upbringing and personal values. Because everyone has a culture within themselves, the racial identity models may not have been able to account for each person’s personal development in conjunction with their racial development. Lastly, some Black men may tie their primary identity a variable other than race. Limitations are further explored in chapter 5.

**Definition of Terms**

**Predominately White Institution/ University (PWI)**- Universities that contain over 50 % White students in their student body (Brown & Dancy, 2010)

**Historically Black College/University (HBCU)**- Universities that were created for Black people as an opportunity to obtain education when segregation did not permit them to attend Predominately White Universities. These schools have more that 50 % Black/ African American
students in their student body (Brown & Dancy, 2010)

**Race**- self-identification to a specific social group such as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, or some other race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017)

**Black**- The Black race is defined as, “A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017)

**White**- The White race is defined as, “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa” (U.S Census Bureau, 2017)

**Resilience**- Resilience has been defined as the ability to thrive in the face of adversity, (Mu’uim, 2010). Resilience has also been defined by various researchers as the positive adaptation and recovery process after an experienced stressor (Garmezy, 1974,1991; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker,2000; Ungar, 2008; Masten, 2011).

**Protective Factors**- Factors are used to buffer stressors from the internal and external environment, i.e., individual attribute, family, and support (Mu’m in, 2010; Hubbard, 2001).

**Poverty**- The state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions (Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary, 2018)

**Social Mobility**- “The ease and frequency of moving into a different class than that into which one was born,” (Simandan, 2017, p.1)

**Socioeconomic Status**- income, educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society (*Education and Socioeconomic Status Factsheet*, 2018).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Recipients of bachelor’s degrees may earn approximately one million dollars more than persons with only a high school diploma over the course of their lifetime, (Carnivale & Rose, 2011). In 2011, those with a bachelor’s degree earned an average $21,000 more per year than those with high school diplomas and had more access to health care (Baum, Ma & Payea, 2013). During 2000 and 2008, 31% of those with a bachelor’s degree from middle class homes moved to the top quartile of income in comparison to only 12% of those with a high school diploma (Baum et al., 2013). The breadth of employment opportunities widens with a bachelor’s degree, and allows degree holders to follow their career interests, provide for themselves and their families, and tend to financial obligations (Rose, 2009).

Much research and data collection has been done to track college student enrollment and success. The National Board of Educational Statistics (2016), stated that in 2014, 20.2 million people enrolled as full-time students at American colleges and universities, which was a 2.9 million student increase from the year 2004. More specifically, graduation statistics have been disaggregated to indicate enrollment of different races and gender. Due to oppression in America, Black people were not always afforded the opportunity to seek a post-secondary education (Bethel, 2013). The Civil Rights movement of 1964 influenced laws against discrimination which banned segregation within college institutions (Anderson, 2002; Karkouti, 2016). While the enrollment for Black people increased after the civil rights movement, studies showed that Black males tend to graduate less than the all racial demographics as well as the opposite sex (Strayhorn, 2014).

Some research supported that Black men appear to struggle with college completion at Predominately White Institutions (PWI) because they feel unsupported, disconnected and
racial discrimination against (McGaskey, Freeman Guyton, Richmond & Guyton, 2016; Shorette & Palmer, 2015), other research supports that Black men also struggle with college completion in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) (Hilton & Reneau, 2016) where the environment was created to be more supportive and culturally inclusive for Black people (Hilton & Reneau, 2016; Fries-Britt, Burt, & Franklin, 2012). While some studies communicated that the college environment is essential to academic success for Black students, other studies showed that there is no evidence that college environment impacts academic performance. For example, Fries-Britt, Burt, and Franklin (2012) conducted a study of 44 Black male College students at HBCUs’ science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs and concluded that feeling connected to peers and faculty was “critical” to the persistence and graduation of Black students. However, Kim (2002) found that there was no statistical evidence to support academic benefits for a Black student to attend an HBCU over a PWI. Many studies provide statistical evidence that Black males are not completing college as often as their counterparts (race and gender) at both HBCUs and PWIs (Ezeala-Harrison, 2014; Richards & Awokoya, 2012; Xanthos, Treadwell, & Holden, 2010).

While there exists literary support regarding the disparity of Black male attrition from college, there is scarcity in literature that discusses qualities of Black men who graduate from college. Black men who graduate college defy statistics regarding attrition, and by pass challenges that are unique to the Black population in four-year universities (Harper, 2012). While there is a dearth of information regarding successful Black men who complete college, there are some informative studies that connect variables that are imperative to healthy functioning of college students. For example, positive racial identity was associated with resilience and healthy mental health in Black college students (Berwise, 2015; Chavous,
Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, & Zimmerman, 2003; Hubbard, 2011; Mu’min, 2010) and student resilience has been associated with school achievement (Bethell, 2013; Kim & Hargrove, 2013). A study done by Destin and Oyserman (2009), found that students whose racial identity was soundly developed had higher motivation and were more academically successful. Another study provided that Chavous et. al (2003) communicated that the stage of racial identity a student was in guided their educational paths and academic achievement. Literature supports that racial identity and resilience are important factors in academic achievement for Black students, however, there is a gap in the literature that examines racial identity and resilience in Black males who have graduated college in comparison to Black males who did not. In efforts to explore the disparity of Black male college attrition and the resilience of Black males who have surpassed challenges and persisted to graduation, this literature review explores the historical plight of Black Americans, racial identity theories, college persistence theories, challenges Black men navigate in both PWIs and HBCUs and Resilience in Black Americans and Black Men.

**Race and Historical Plight of Black Americans**

The U.S. Census Bureau (2017), reported race as being the self-identification to a specific social group such as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, or some other race. The Black race is defined as, “A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The U.S. Census (2017) also stated that Black people make up 13% of the United States population and are the largest racial minority. Therefore, the Black population contributes to a large part of Americas diversity. Within the Black race, many different ethnicities exist as do various distinction in culture (Berwise, 2013). For example, people from African countries may not identify with the culture of Blacks from America. Blacks who have been cultured in America
have had unique experiences of unequal treatment in comparison to others from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

In the historical context of America, Blacks have endured slavery, segregation, social injustice and many other types of disparities due to white supremacy and unfair laws (Dade, Taartakov, Hargrove, Leigh, 2015; Mu’min, 2010; Payne, 2014). Slavery in America legally occurred from 1619 – 1865 in the form of chattel enslavement (Bush, 1993). Chattel enslavement involved the ownership of a slave as property that was bought and sold; therefore, slaves had no personal rights or freedom (Bush, 1993). Chattel enslavement in America was inhuman, violent and detrimental to one’s wellbeing (Tovar-Murray & Tovar-Murray, 2012). Approximately 90 percent of the Black population were slaves under the chattel system until 1865 when slavery was abolished (Bertocchi & Dimico, 2012). Post slavery America was still very hostile and precarious for Blacks due to degradation, and were mocked for being socially and genetically inferior, unintelligent and dangerous (Bertocchi & Dimico, 2014; Delgado, 2001; Middleton, 2008; Mosley, 2014).

Free Black people struggled to integrate in American society post slavery due to disenfranchisement (Dade, Taartakov, Hargrove, Leigh, 2015; Payne, 2014; Mu’min, 2010). Access to businesses, education, healthcare and other resources were not only limited but racially segregated and unequal (Gibson, 2013; Goings, 2016; Reid, 2007; Shorette & Palmer 2015; Harper, 2012). For example, segregation on the Louisiana Carts were legalized by the court system (Plessy Versus Ferguson, 1896) and while educational systems were desegregated in (Brown Versus Board of Education, 1954) the decision was met with much resistance from school officials (Welsh, 2009). In 1964, the Civil Rights Act instated efforts to provide equal rights for all, yet this legal support was met with much resistance from businesses and other
institutions that did not favor integration (Franklin, 1999). These legal cases highlight the resistance Black people faced as they were adjusting to American society post abolition. Furthermore, socioeconomic disadvantages, mass incarceration, unstable racial climate, and traumatic personal loss are sociological factors that Blacks still face in current times (Farmer & Hairston, 2013; Payne, 2014; Robertson & Mason, 2008). The Jim Crow era curated separatism and discrimination of Black Americans. Although the Jim Crow era has passed, remnants of the eras’ ideology still exists in many institutions and has resulted in negative sociological factors that impact the development of Black Americans, especially Black men (Payne, 2014; Wilkins et.al., 2013).

**Socialization of Black Males**

Black men have undergone much difficulty during the acculturation process in America (Hargrove, 2014). Without factoring in race, men in the U.S. have been socialized with the thought that emotions, such as sadness, are negative and that it is inappropriate to cry or be upset (Bethell, 2013). Therefore, men express emotions in ways to remain “masculine” (Farmer et.al., 2013; Payne, 2014). Black men experience microaggressions that may impact their self-concept, which can influence the way emotional disturbances are expressed and interpreted (Chao, Longo, Wang, Dasgupta, & Fear, 2014). Courtenay (2000) expressed that men, regardless of race, partake in less healthy lifestyles physically and mentally. Therefore, racial and gender demographics play a major in the way Black males conceptualize and manage major stressors.

Masculinity varies from culture to culture (Mincey, Alfonso, Hackney & Luque, 2014), Research studies support that Black men tend to view themselves within the context of their environment and counterparts (Bethell, 2013; Mu’min, 2010). This means that the environment is imperative to identity development. Americans social political environment provided centuries
of disenfranchisement and racist environments, which has led to the undermining of Black men’s emotions and wellbeing (Franklin, 1999). There is an intersectional relationship between Black identity and male identity for Black men (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Chaney (2009) found that Black men identified qualities of manhood such as maturity, responsibility, provider, and self-awareness. However, sociological factors associated with the Black race (socioeconomic disadvantages, mass incarceration, unstable racial climate, and traumatic personal loss) sometimes impede and challenge the development of Black manhood (Campbell & Long, 2014). Black males emerging into adulthood must be aware of the sociological factors as they begin to involve themselves in institutions such as the job market and college. Bertocchi & Dimico, (2012) found that countries who have had a population of Black people enslaved and disenfranchised, also see that population struggle with educational attainment. The sociological factors for a Black man may evoke challenges to persisting through to completion in both PWI’s and HBCUs; (Hilton & Reneau, 2016; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010).

**Human Developmental Stage of Adolescents and Emerging Adults**

While Black men navigate PWIs and HBCUs in effort to obtain post-secondary education, they must to adjust to the college environment. With college comes new experiences, more responsibility and independence (Arnett, 2005). Thus, it is important to consider factors such as the student’s maturity and social frame of reference from a developmental perspective. Erikson's eight developmental stages (Erikson, 1980) help explain how different age groups adapt to their life experiences, along with ways in which they work towards alleviating stress that accompanies life’s transitions (Flemming, 2004). According to Erikson (1959), the adolescence stage is between 12-18 and the late adolescence stage occurs between the ages of 18-40. The adolescent stage is referred to as the Identity versus Isolation crisis with transition to the late
adolescent stages named Intimacy versus Isolation crisis (Erikson, 1959; Erikson, 1980). The traditional college student age ranges between 18-23 (Pelletier, 2010), therefore, college students are theoretically experiencing an identity versus confusion crises and intimacy versus isolation crises.

Identity versus identity confusion involves the formation of an adolescent’s unique identity separately from others (Erikson, 1959,1985). A person who can healthily differentiate themselves from others has successfully adapted in this stage, while those who do not differentiate fall into identity confusion. During the process of developing, there are 4 coping mechanisms those in the identity versus identity confusion crisis perform, they are referred to as foreclosure, moratorium, diffusion and identity achievement (Erikson 1959;1980, Fleming, 2004; Marcia, 1966). Foreclosure involves prematurely mimicking an identity due to not having investment in an authentic one yet, moratorium is a hiatus from development of an authentic identity, diffusion involves the lack of commitment to anything, and lastly identity development is when an adolescent comes to terms with who they are and what they value (Erikson 1959;1980; Fleming, 2004). So, in theory, the coping patterns are an important development process that college students may be experiencing while adjusting to their new environment. If a person does not successfully progress through coping with their developmental crises, the results can lead to a maladjusted individual with psychological and emotional issues (Erikson, 1980)

Late adolescents also negotiate their connection with others to either form meaningful relationships or fall into isolation (Erikson 1985; Fleming, 2004). Erikson postured that intimacy vs isolation stage involves “the commitment of oneself to concrete affiliations,” (p.70, 1959). When an adolescent struggle with creating concrete affiliations, the pathology that ensues is an isolative pattern of behaviors. In theory, college students who have transitioned into this stage
are either making connections with counterparts in the work, love and academic areas of their lives, or they are disconnected. Unfortunately, lack of success obtaining healthy relationships can result in depression and loneliness, and in the case of Black men, it can lead to difficulty reaching out for help and support during difficult times (Calloway, 2000; Payne 2004)

Erikson (1964) added that special attention should be given to the development of Black adolescence due to added challenges that may hinder successful transition from one stage to the next. Black adolescents can be hindered in their development as they acculturate to the dominant cultural standards in society because the dominant culture ideal is at times pervasive to minority cultures (Erikson, 1959). For example, Black culture values development towards interdependence rather independence which is not only valued by the dominant culture but independence is the social norm in major institutions (Arnett, 2003). Further research conducted on the developmental stages resulted in the introduction of an adapted developmental stage. The adapted stage is known as “emerging adulthood” with the age ranging between 18-25; it also includes more cultural diversity (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood operationalizes the transition to more responsibility and formation of values and social norms (Arnett, 2000; 2005).

**Emerging Adulthood for Black Americans**

Erikson originally constructed the developmental stages using Eurocentric frame of reference, and while Black men do face many of the challenges other emerging adults do, their experiences are plagued by microaggression, negative stereotypes and discrimination (Brody & Arnett, 2008). Environment plays a major role in the development of emerging adults (Estrada-Martínez, Caldwell, Bauermeister, & Zimmerman, 2012). Environmental stressors Black adolescents may face, like racism and stereotypes, can contribute to low self-esteem and negative self-image (Metzger, 2015). Negative self-image and poor self-esteem impacts identity
development (Erikson, 1980). Emerging adulthood may be different in Black men than other racial counterparts because as a marginalized population, they must discern their own conceptualization of their true selves and the negative stereotypes or messages an oppressive society may communicate to them (Arnett & Brody, 2008).

Racial discrimination, self-esteem, the ability to handle stress, neighborhood violence, delayed romantic relationships, and low socioeconomic status (SES) are several factors that may affect the development of Black men as they navigate the emerging adult stage (Estrada et al. 2012). A study done by Wilson, Sailor, Calix and Carney (2017), showed that socio-economic status as well as societal rejection led to both decreased opportunities for independence and feelings of oppression for Black youth during emerging adulthood. Many of the social stressors occur simultaneously for Black male emerging adults, which can be overwhelming in this developmental stage, and result in mental health disturbances and maladaptive coping (Arnett 2000; Arnett, 2001; Arnett, 2003).

**Mental Health of Black Males**

Managing many different roles and stressors can be mentally exhausting and debilitating (Kogan, Allen & Brody, 2015). As previously mentioned, Black males in the U.S. have experienced a long history of racism and systematic disadvantage (Dade, Taartakov, Hargrove, Leigh, 2015; Karkouti, 2016; Payne, 2014; Mu’min, 2010). However, this is not to infer that all Black males have the same experience or respond in the same ways. A study showed that the level of acculturation in Black Americans in the U.S has been linked to the ability to cope with stressors (Kelly, 2000). Black Americans level of assimilation and acculturation, if low, can result in mental health issues (Arnette & Brody, 2008), and due to cultural values and learned coping skills, mental health issues in Black males go untreated, undiagnosed, and may lead to
behavior that is pathologized and stereotyped (Payne, 2014). The many stressors Black Americans face may result in symptomology that hinders productivity and wellness (Graham, West, Martinez, & Roemer, 2016). Anxiety and depression are linked to dropout in college students (Eisenberg, Lipson, & Posselt, 2016) and are very commonly experienced by the Black student and left untreated (Calloway, 2006).

**Anxiety**

Patten (2013), reported that 88% of Black Americans and 57% of White Americans believe that Black Americans experience racism in the United States. Only over little than half of white American believe Blacks still undergo racism, but the presence of racism is very explicit and pervasive to the Black community. Williams and Mohammed (2013) reported a positive correlation between symptoms of anxiety and experienced racism in Black males. Pieterse, Todd, Neville, and Carter (2012) examined 138 empirical studies and found a positive correlation between anxiety and depression in Black Americans and self-reported racism experienced. Calloway (2006) and Graham et al. (2016) posited that racial discrimination is a strong predictor of anxiety symptoms in Black American men, and since most symptoms go untreated they develop in more serious mental health impairments.

According to *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM–5*; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) Generalized Anxiety Disorder is diagnosed when a person is experiencing three or more of the following symptoms; excessive anxiety and worry, fatigue, restlessness, muscle tension, difficulty concentrating and sleep disturbances for the duration of 6 months. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) can manifest in Black Americans who perceive racism daily due to the psychological efforts it can take to cope and adapt (Carter, 2012; Calloway, 2006; Soto, Dawson-Andoh & BeLue, 2011). Soto et al. (2011) utilized the
World Mental Health Composite International Diagnostic Interview (WMH-CIDI) and The Lifetime Discrimination subscale of the Detroit Area Study Discrimination Questionnaire (DAS-DQ) to assess anxiety and racial discrimination among Black people, White people and Afro-Caribbean people. Results yielded that the Black Americans had a stronger positive relationship between racial discrimination and GAD symptoms than non-white or Hispanic participants (Soto et al., 2011). Thus, those who perceive, and experience racial discrimination have a higher propensity to develop anxiety.

**Depression**

Symptoms of major depressive disorder may manifest in different ways for people; therefore, it is important to consider culture when evaluating depressive symptoms, especially for Black men (Calloway 2006; Kogan et al., 2015). According to *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM–5*; American Psychiatric Association, 2013), depression is diagnosed when a person is exhibiting depressed mood, hypersomnia or insomnia, loss of interest in things they once enjoyed, worthlessness and excessive guilt, recurrent suicidal thoughts, and difficulty concentrating on tasks. An essential factor in the diagnosis criteria is daily reoccurrence of symptoms. Black Americans experience racism daily and it contributes to the impairment in functioning in daily tasks like work and school (Anderson, 2012; Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009; Sanders-Thompson, 2002). Because Black men have been cultured through the expectations of masculinity to internalize their frustrations and emotions regarding racism, psychological distress results (Johnson & Greene, 1991) which has been shown to lead to depressive symptoms (Hammond, 2012; Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011).

Hammond (2012) performed a study to examine the role of masculinity on coping with
racism and depression in Black men. Results yielded that Black Male masculine roles-specific risk factors such as, intentional emotional inhibition, internalizing emotional disturbances or “taking racism like a man” was associated with depression. He also found that frequent racial discrimination was associated with more depressive symptoms in every age group after controlling for general social stress, masculine role norms salience, socioeconomic status, and demographic factors. A person more prone to depressive symptoms may report more experiences of discrimination (Hammond, 2012). Minorities’ identity development is often influenced by the comparison to white culture, which at times, may be perceive as racially oppressive by the minorities (Mu’Min, 2010). Implications can be made that the perceived racial discriminatory experiences have a strong correlation with the depressive symptoms of Black males and an impact on Black American males’ racial identity (Hammond, 2012; Kogan, Yu, Allen, & Broady, 2014; Mu’Min, 2010).

**Racial Identity Theories**

Racial identity refers to the degree to which a person’s identify with their race (Chavous, Tabbye, Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell,Kohn-Wood, & Zimmerman, 2003). Black men vary in the way in which they may identify with their race. Researchers have highlight stages and transition from unhealthy identity to more comprehensive and positive identity (Atkinson, Moten & Sue, 1998; Cross 1971,1991; Cross & Vandiver 2001; Cross & Fhagan 2001; Delgado & Stefancic 2001). Racial identity is influenced by internal and external factors (Mu’Min, 2010). The three following theories address historical context, sociopolitical implications and interpersonal aspects of the Black American racial identity.

**Nigrescence Theory Original (NT-O) (Cross 1971; 1991)**

William E. Cross (1971) introduced a four-stage identity development theory for Black
Americans titled Nigrescence. The theory has been revised in 1991 (Cross, 1991) and 2001 (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Nigrescence Theory explains the process of “becoming black” and is considered the seminal work for the exploration of Black racial identity (Bethel, 2013). The Nigrescence theory is empirically supported and purports that racial identity is linked to mental health and level of functioning (Bethel, 2013; Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Vandiver et. al, 2001). It also purports that there can be a progression to a positive Black identity which allows one to embrace their own culture without the rejection of others (Cross, 1971; 1991). The stages of the Nigrescence (Cross 1971; 1991) are pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, internalization and commitment.

The pre-encounter stage is characterized by rejection of Black culture and full acceptance of White culture with the notion that “White is right,” and “Black is wrong.” (Cross 1971). A Black person in the Pre-encounter stage may feel that they cannot associate with other blacks or “blackness” and try to be around more Whites and “whiteness,” (Bethell, 2013; Cross 1971). That Black person transitions to the encounter stage when their accustomed world view and values of the dominate culture are challenged and defaced through avenues such as racism and discrimination. The Black person is forced to acknowledge racism and how it plays a role in their life and identity. When a Black person in the encounter stage they may form anger towards the dominate group which fuels a desire to disconnect from the dominate group and their ideals completely.

During reconciliation from the encounter with racism, the Black person enters the immersion/emersion stage, which is characterized by engulfment into Black culture and rejecting White culture. The process of disconnection, immersion, is sometimes followed by a curiosity to explore and fully involve oneself in African and Black culture as well as extreme separatist
ideals which support the degradation of Whites and White culture. There is a marked transition from immersion to emersion when the individual has explored their Black identity and culture and feel a sense of confidence and security. The confidence and security gained from the exploration is followed by a leveling out of the previously experienced anger and openness to other cultures. A transition to a more self-development of identity occurs.

The internalization stage encompasses self-esteem and the Black person is more confident about their identity and their “Blackness”. The Black person no longer rejects Black culture or Black people, and they also no longer reject White people or white culture. The Black person then transitions to internalization and commitment, which is when they can generalize their experiences of racism to that of the entire Black race and develop a sense of concern for Black counter parts. Black people in the internalization-commitment stage develop a healthy sense of Black identity and belongingness to their ethnic group. Now there is a sense of comfort with their own identity and those around them and these feelings of comfort and ideals are sustained over time.

**Nigrescence Theory Expanded (NT-E) (Cross & Vandiver, 2001).**

Cross and Vandiver (2001) expanded on the NT-O and included eight attitudes under three of the five original stages. Under the Pre-encounter identity cluster, there are three attitudes called assimilation, miseducation and self-hatred. Assimilation refers to the degree that the Black person places importance on its own race, it reflects low race salience (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Worrell, Vandiver. Schaefer, Cross, Fhagen-Smith, 2006). Worrell et al (2006) state that both self-hatred and miseducation reflect negative race salience. In other words, self-hatred and miseducation result from continuous reinforcement of negative messages regarding Black people. Miseducation attitudes come from those who endorse negative stereotypes and
self-hatred describes those who hate black people (Townsel, 2013)

The cluster under Immersion/Emersion includes the intense black involvement and anti-white attitudes. Intense black involvement is when Black people accept anything associated with Black Culture or Blackness as good. While the positive aspects of intense Black involvement may result in healthy cultural exploration and a step towards positive internalized black identity, there may be dangers of being enveloped by rage, guilt and anger during this exploration if one is not openminded (Vandiver et. al, 2001). Cross and Vandiver, (2001) stated that Anti-white attitudes are characterized by denigration and hate of White people and culture and if extreme, these attitudes can become a part of the persons Black identity.

The last cluster is under the Internalization stage with three attitudes titled Nationalist, biculturalist, and multiculturalist. Vandiver et. al., (2001) stated that “The Black nationalist attitude is characterized by a focus on Black empowerment, economic independence and a heightened awareness of Black history and culture,” (p. 180). Black empowerment was later coined as Afrocentrism. Afrocentrism endorses the idea that Black culture is paramount to Black identity (Moseley, 2014). The Biculturalist attitude is the merging of Afrocentrism and tolerance of the White culture simultaneously. The Black person is usually able to accept being both Black and American (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Vandiver et. al 2001). Lastly, the Multiculturalist attitude is characterized by the acceptance of multiple identities. With a multiculturalist attitude Black people embrace intersectionality of their existence while still holding their Black identity as salient, for example, a Black person can identify himself as Black, male and religious (Cross & Vandiver 2001).

**Model of Black Identity Development (Cross & Fhagan-Smith, 2001)**

Cross and Fhagan-Smith (2001), conceptualized a lifespan developmental model of Black
identity based on Nigrescence. The model of black identity is characterized by three central concepts called Personal Identification (PI), Reference Group Orientation (RGO), and Race Salience (RS). The model is broken into 6 life sectors divided by life span developmental stages. The six sectors are infancy and childhood, preadolescence, adolescence, emerging adult, adulthood and the Nigrescence recycling period. Three Nigrescence lifestyle patterns capture the six sectors of transition and categorized them into three life span patterns.

In childhood sector, Cross and Fhagan-Smith (2001), state that Black children are inherently unaware of race and racism, they are socialized and educated by their family SES, school, church and habitual practices within their home and community. Then in the preadolescent sector, the racial focus comes from parental influence and reinforcement of racial ideals and importance. Preadolescence may experience low or high racial salience. Parents who do not place much emphasis on race besides physical appearance would influence a low race salience in their preadolescent while parents who place high importance of the role of black culture and identity influence high salience for the Black preadolescent. But the preadolescent may also experience internalized racism if the parents reinforce negative stereotypes about Black people (Martens, 2009).

As the black preadolescent transition to adolescence, they begin to explore their Black racial identity more, their peer groups are more important, and they would like to have some context about their identity. Race salience carried over from the preadolescent stage is either matured or stays the same based on exploration of identity. High salience is an indicator in this stage that the Black preadolescent is developing towards a healthy Black identity (Cross & Fhagan-Smith 2001; Martens, 2009). Emerging adults experience low and high salience again as they either identify more closely with black culture and black identity, or they do not place race
as an important part of their identity. Internalized racism reemerges for the emerging adults and it is essential that they progress into Nigrescence to develop a healthy Black identity.

The adult experiences the four stages of Nigrescence as described in Cross and Vandiver, (2001) Nigrescence expanded theory. Those stages are preencoutner, encounter, immersion/emersion and internalization/internalization-commitment. The last sector describes the return of the Nigrescence cycle, but this time, wisdom may develop as the Black person is attempting to resolve any issues with their Blackness and self-identity. External influences interact with the internal processes described in the Nigrescence cycle as a Black person negotiate their identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). External influences largely include the social institutions that have an impact on the sociopolitical environment in which the Black American form their racial identity (Atkinson& Sue, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

**Critical Race Theory (Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic, 2001)**

Critical Race Theory emerged as lawyers, social justice activists and other legal scholars began to notice inequality in the justice system and began to highlight racism from a legal standpoint in the mid 1970’s. Over time the movement expanded as scholar from various disciplines began to examine the relationship between race, racism and power relations in general. Derrick Bell was one of the pioneers to contribute to the Critical Race Theory movement after his book “Race, Racism and American Law.” Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado were joined by other scholars to solidify their ideas regarding racial disparity in American institutions. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic utilized foundational pieces written by pioneers of this movement to establish Critical Race Theory (2001). Now, Critical Race Theory, or CRT, explores the way in which racial inequality is maintained through institutional structures and normalize the unequal treatment of minorities (Rollock & Gilborn, 2011).
is an institutional structure that applies to this theoretical posture.

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), there are five themes examined through CRT; centrality of racism, white supremacy, voices of people of color, interest convergence and intersectionality. Centrality of racism infers that racism is engraved into society’s norms and can sometimes be overlooked due to maintained practices. Racism transitioned from an overt presence to covert sociopolitical underpinnings, and not only has racism become nuanced because of this transition, but is now normalized (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Rollock & Gilborn, 2011). White supremacy maintains racist practices within Americas social structures (Rollock & Gilborn, 2011). CRT is not refereeing to extreme hate groups who advocate for White supremacy like Ku Klux Klan, instead, CRT refers to systems such as economic, political and social structures that maintain sustention of White privilege (Bell, 1992; Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017).

Because the dominant culture influences the narrative of the American experience (Bridges, 2010; Gipson, 2013; Grissette-Banks, 2014), the counter-narrative or “voices of people of color” is highly valued when disseminating insight about racism in more depth. Voices of people of color explore the experiences of minorities in America from their point of reference. Personal narratives assist with informing academic scholars and the society about racism through personal experiences and passed down stories. Story-telling has been a tool used to transform perspectives about racism in America through literature in CRT qualitative studies (Rollock, 2012; Delgado; 2001).

Interest convergence is when the interest of equalizing benefits of a system between Whites and Blacks happen when it is in the benefit of a dominant culture. The legal justice system exemplified interest convergence in Brown v. Board of Education (1954). Bell (1980)
contended that the only reason the court ruled in favor of Brown was because of the increased positive reputation and economic benefits to segregated educational institutions that would result after racial integration (p. 524). Bell asserted that many of the changes that resulted in the civil rights movement was largely influenced by self-interest motives because of interest convergence. He also stated that in the educational sector, racial and cultural inclusiveness enacted by universities and educational facilities usually happen because of the benefit to the university, not the students, which is an issue because it does not acknowledge the damage done by exclusion and overly-concentrated focus on racial balance (p.553). The latter assertion is important because what results is invalidation to the Black student’s experience as they navigate their identity within the context of the university’s culture (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Lastly, intersectionality, recognizes the complexity of a person’s identity and how different facets of a person’s identity merge together simultaneously (Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Rollock & Gilborn, 2011). It’s important to consider history and socio-political contexts of a person while examining inequalities as to not disregard other forms of injustice they may experience (i.e. gender, sexual orientation, SES, etc.) (Crenshaw, 1989). CRT also examines the within and between group differences of racial groups (Rollock and Gilborn, 2011). For the Black male, race and gender are two identity pieces that intersect with one another (Wingfield & Wingfield, 2014). Literature has suggested, ideologies within Black masculinity has a great impact on racial identity and assimilation into the dominant culture in America (Calloway 2000, Hammond, 2014; Mu’Min, 2010).

**Racial/Cultural Identity Developmental Model (Atkinson, Morton & Sue, 1998)**

Based on the seminal work, Nigrescence (Cross, 1991), Atkinson Morton, and Sue (1998)
believed that all minority groups form a set of responsive behaviors and thought patterns that result from the inevitable oppression they experience. Atkinson et. al (1998) integrated various ethnic identity development models to create a five stage Minority Identity Development Model (MID) that later expanded to the Racial and Cultural Identity Development Model (R/CID) by Sue and Sue (1999). The MID model is aids therapists with understanding the complexities of an individual apart of a racial minority group as the client tries to understand themselves within the context of the dominant culture. The five stages that describe the development of minority identity are conformity, dissonance and appreciation, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative awareness. There are corresponding attitudes and beliefs for each of the five stages; attitude toward self, others of the same minority, others of a different minority and toward the dominant group.

In the conformity stage, minorities adhere to the value preferences of the dominant culture. Cross (1991) pre-encounter stage mirrors this stage as it highlights low race salience. The attitudes toward self and others within the same minority is usually negative or null due to lack of importance of race at this point. Those in the conformity stage may also have negative or null feelings about other cultures, but positive attitudes toward the dominant culture. The minority may undergo identity damage in this stage as they may accept the ideals rooted in racism about themselves and the racial group to which they belong (Atkinson et. al. 1998). The person then transitions to the dissonance and appreciation stage.

The dissonance and appreciation stage involve the persons encounters with information that challenges their values and beliefs against the minority group to which they belong. The person of the minority culture forms appreciation toward self, others in the same minority group and other minority groups. However, while there is an increased appreciation for minority groups
in the stage, there is deprecation of the dominant group. The person of the minority culture begins to withdraw from the dominant culture at this stage and transition to resistance and immersion.

Resistance and immersion is characterized by the withdrawal from dominate culture and resistance to anything that represent dominant culture ideologies (Atkinson, Morton & Sue, 1998). A person within this stage becomes enamored with the qualities of their own culture and immerses themselves within traditions and environments that are representative of their culture’s identity. There is anger and distrust towards the dominant culture and is often followed by the rejection of eurocentrism. Black people within the resistance and immersion stage have often become involved in groups that support the “Black Power” ideology as it primarily focuses on the engulfment of black culture and resistance of oppression perpetrated by the dominant culture (Cross 1979, 1991, 2001) For the Black male college student in this stage, he may withdraw from people from the dominant culture which may include professors and student support services.

The last two stages introspection and integrative awareness involves the leveling out of the anger once held for the dominant culture and the transition to appreciation of self and others. Black men who experience introspection become more neutral in their self-evaluation and the evaluation of the dominant culture. There may be some struggling in this stage for the Black man as he may question his loyalty to his own group and experience some dissonance with accepting some ideologies of the dominant culture. However, as he transitions into integrated awareness stage he forms a more secure racial identity while developing the ability to appreciate and respect other people’s racial identities.

Summary of Racial Identity Theories/ Model

Nigrescence, the Racial/Cultural Identity Model and Critical Race Theory highlight the
impact of large cultural structures on the personal development of a Black person’s identity. Therefore theoretically, with regards to the Black college student, the Black adolescent/emerging adult must navigate through different challenges to arrive at feelings of inclusivity and acceptance of oneself and others. Even still, if a Black person successfully develops healthy self-identity and appreciation for others or at least begins to transition from complete assimilation, CRT states that it is the structural institutions that symbolizes and implements separatism and negative stereotypes for minorities. Therefore, the Black student is always surrounded by the pervasive external involvement of racism and sociological factors associated with the dominant culture’s values in the college environment, (Townsel, 2013). Environment is one of the components that factor into college completion for all students in general (Tinto, 1993). With regards to racial identity development, the socio-political environment Black men experiences in life, has been shown to influence their interaction with the college environment and may impact college completion (Strayhorn 2014) For those who have attended historically black colleges, Worell et. al (2006) found that Black people who were rooted in a predominately black environment has more separatist views that those who were in a predominately white environment which may suggest that the stage of racial identity for a Black person has something to do with involvement in the college campus culture.

**College Completion Theory**

Alexander Astin’s (1984) Student Involvement Theory, began the conversations about student persistence through college. Astin (1984, 1999) postulated that “student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psycho-logical energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p.518). There are also five assumptions about student involvement that Astin presented in his theory; involvement requires both psychological and physical investment;
involvement is on a continuum and may vary from each student; involvement can be measured qualitatively and quantitatively; the student will receive what they put out in their psychological energy; involvement is strongly correlated with academic performance (Astin, 1984, 1999).

Further exploring the phenomena of student involvement, Astin created a the IEO model (1984) which involved student inputs, environment and output. The students input involves characteristics they bring to college like demographics and educational background; the environment involves the student’s interaction with the campus resources (i.e financial aid office, student support services), institution characteristics; and lastly, output involves achievement and completion (Astin, 1984, 1993). Ultimately Astin (1984,1999) theorized that the more involvement a student has in their college experience, the more likely they were to graduate and be successful. Astin acknowledges that there is little control over the inputs students bring to college, and their inputs can directly interact with the environment and affect the output.

Theorists utilized Austin’s foundational work to cultivate the deeper understanding to college completion and persistence.

**Tinto’s Student Departure Theory (1993)**

Inspired by the IEO model, Tinto’s Student Departure theory (1993) focuses on the connectedness of student to their environment and retention and attrition from college. Tintos model of student departure includes pre-entry attributes, goals and commitments, institutional experiences (academic and social), goals and commitments again and then output (departure). Tinto (1993) found that the more connected a student felt to their college environment both academically and socially, the more likely they were to persist to completion. Tinto (1993) also expressed that one does not have control pre-entry attributes, and that may impact connectedness and departure. In the Student Departure Theory, there is forced departure and voluntary
departure. Forced departure is influenced by failing grades, legal obligations, family and financial while voluntary departure involved isolation, homesickness, transfer to another school, family.

**Padilla Expertise Model of Student Success (1999, 2009)**

Padilla (1999) examined college retention by conducting research on successful minority students. Padilla included the concepts of input and output from Astin’s (1984) Student involvement Theory to create an adapted model for minority college students. Padilla found that minority students must negotiate their barriers during the process of finding balance with experiential learning though campus involvement and classroom learning; this is similar to Tinto’s (1993) Social and Academic compartments of the college experience. Padilla (2009) states:

> “Student success involves more than preventing students from abandoning their studies. To promote student success, one also must understand why many students, some of them under the most challenging circumstances, are able to complete all program requirements and actually graduate with a diploma or degree” (p. 9)

The knowledge that successful students are important because they are navigating the same barriers as those who do not persist (Padilla 1999, 2009). Padilla’s point highlights the importance of exploring Black male college students who have succeed in completing college. He emphasizes that identifying barriers along with the knowledge that successful students of minority races have, can provide a more in depth understanding to college completion for scholars and students.

In addition to Padilla’s model, Brown, Morning, and Watkins (2005), found that Black
students from both PWIs and HBCUs were simultaneously negotiating racism and discrimination while trying to maintain academic success, and their GPAs negatively suffered. College completion theories infer that there are internal and external factors that contribute to either attrition or retention. College completion theorists (Brown, Morning, and Watkins, 2005; Padilla 1999; Tinto, 1993) have been able to include cultural factors to highlight the added negotiation between self and environment during efforts to persist for minority and Black students.

**Challenges for Black Male Students in Predominately White Institutions**

As previously discussed, while Black people have taken advantage of the opportunity to seek a post-secondary degree, in 2006, the graduation rate at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) was 43% for Black Americans and 63% for White Americans (Journal of Black Education, 2007). Black men who attend PWIs appear to struggle with attrition (Ezeala-Harrison 2014; Harper 2009, 2012; Hubbard, 2011; Spruill 2011). Black male college students must confront and learn to cope with certain social and academic issues while attending PWI’s (Byrd & Chavous, 2011). Some important factors that play a major role in retention and attrition at PWI’s are perceptions of racism, support from student services, and campus environment (Ezeala-Harrison 2014; Griffin & Hurtado, 2011; Harper 2009, 2012; Hubbard, 2011; Kogan, Yu, Allen, & Brody, 2015; Spruill 2011).

**Perception of Racism**

Rowles and Changming (2012), defined perceived racism as, “...the subjective experience one has of prejudice or discrimination...” (p.11). Some may argue that one's perception of racism is not equivalent to overt institutionalized racism; institutionalized racism is described as racial discrimination or prejudices that are perpetrated by major institutions and societal systems (Dade, Tartakov, Hargrave, & Leigh 2015). However, perceptions of prejudicial
or discriminatory experiences has the same psychological effects as objectively defined discriminatory occurrences (Calloway, 2006; Kogan, Yu, Allen, & Brody, 2015; Pieterse, Todd, Neville, & Carter, 2012). Thus, perception of one's experiences may also be one's reality. Perceptions of unequal treatment form from life experiences and observing others being treated unfairly (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Black men may encounter multiple experiences of perceived prejudice and discrimination in their daily lives (Calloway, 2006), and those perceptions may play a role in the Black male college student’s experiences at PWI’s.

Concurrently, PWIs have historically engaged in exclusionary practices towards Black students, which has resulted in limited access to resources and information, and equal treatment as compared to White students (Karkouti, 2016). Robertson and Mason (2008) reported that PWI’s may intentionally and unintentionally foster racially discriminatory and culturally insensitive environments, causing Black males to struggle with anxiety, depression, and poor academic performance. Universities, both PWI and Historically Black Universities (HBCUs), create programming to provide support to students and help them feel welcomed and part of a community (Harper, 2012) however, if students do not feel culturally connected to the campus then these programs may not work (Tinto, 1984, 1993).

With an increase in minorities attending college (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), studies confer that Black males feel disconnected from the university community at PWI’s (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Tinto’s (1984, 1993) model states that connectedness is a pivotal factor in retention and attrition. Student resources and welcome programing geared toward majority cultures in PWIs, unintentionally exclude the needs of minorities (Laden, 1998). Culturally competent social integration programs and positive interactions with minority staff may assist Black male student rates for retention and achievement as cultural familiarity often
leads to student engagement in various organizations for support and resources (Simmons, 2013).

**Black Male Involvement in Student Support Resources.**

Minorities feel social pressure to assimilate to the dominant culture, which may result in negating one’s own cultural values and norms (Cross 1971, 1991; Laden, 1998). In PWIs, Black people may perceive tense racial climates due to conservative university cultural norms which has resulted in isolation and lack of confidence in self-expression (Karkouti, 2016; Guiffrida, 2005; Laden, 1998). For many black men, attending a primarily White college campus may be the first experience of becoming aware of their Blackness, according to the encounter stage of Nigrescence (1991), this experience may be met with much confusion and anxiety. College environments conducive of healthy racial climates for Black men is inclusive of racially diverse faculty and staff, culturally competent curriculum, and explicit efforts to provide support to students of color as it pertains to retention and graduation (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Thus, when Black students are struggling academically or with cultural adjustments and demands of college, support from professors or student support services that appear to be designed for the dominant culture may not appear to be an option (Griffin & Hurtado, 2011). Studies show that Black students feel more comfortable seeking help if their professor is of the same race, but if not, the perception Black students have for White professors at the institution may hinder Black college students from seeking support or feeling connected to support services (Guiffrida, 2005). Lack of connection and support from professors, both perceived and in reality, can negatively impact academic performance and achievement (Calloway 2006; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Tinto, 1993).

**Black Male Student Involvement in Student Organizations**

PWI’s have conservative values, such as ideals of individualism, that are mostly
incorporated into the university's environment and curriculum (Karkouti, 2016), which can often reject or conflict with Black males’ cultural values, like interdependence (Gram et. al. 2016; Laden, 1998). More specifically, the conservative views of a PWI may not be culturally inclusive of Black culture. PWI’s are institutions that can intentionally or unintentionally embody separatist structures through the campus’ culture and values (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Rollock & Gilborne, 2011). Due to the struggle or discomfort in relating to issues or social events of student organizations at PWIs, Black students form organizations in an attempt fill a cultural void on the college campus (Simmons, 2013).

Student organizations were created to foster connection amongst peers and the university’s community, which improves retention and academic achievement (Kuk & Manning, 2010). Black student organizations were created to create a sense of community and social connection that may not be provide by dominant culture student organizations at PWIs (Simons 2013; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Student organizations are important facilitator in strengthened ethnic identity and inclusiveness of minority students (Little, 2002). In PWI’s, Black student organizations can be scarce, which may limit the students access to the inclusivity and social support student organizations provide if they are not comfortable with joining predominately white organizations (Harper, 2009). Harper’s (2009) study shows that Black male college students distanced themselves from student organizations and social interaction on campus at PWIs as resistance the racism they felt. For those Black male students who have high racial identity as described in the Nigrescence model, they may be more apt to joining with the dominant culture as they are secure within themselves and others, while those who have a low racial identity may struggle at this point (Cross, 2001)
Challenges for Black Males at HBCUs

While HBCU’S foster a culturally inclusive and culture rich environment for Black Americans (Palmer, Davis & Maramba, 2010) the aforementioned college environment qualities have not been effective enough to address the disparity in graduation rates for Black men at HBCUs’. In HBCUs, Black men disproportionately experience unique pre-college factors like low socioeconomic status and insufficient academic preparedness for collegiate rigor in comparison to those who attend PWIs (Ezeala-Harrison, 2014; Richards & Awokoya, 2012; Xanthos, Treadwell, & Holden, 2010). Theoretically, Black males tend to enter college with social circumstances that may place them at a disadvantage (Astin, 1984, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Low SES and inadequate academic preparation is not mutually exclusive to HBCUs and is often found in the Black community and PWIs, however, in efforts to expand opportunities to those who would usually be denied by PWIs, HBCUs tend to accept more students from lower social economic backgrounds and lower academic performance (Richards and Awokoya, 2012). In addition to pre-college factors, Black women are graduating more at HBCUs than Black men due to a difference in gender characteristics (Bethell, 2013; Shorette & Palmer, 2015). Literature appear to suggest that HBCUs struggle with the attrition of Black men due to low SES, poor academic preparedness, and gender characteristics.

Socio-economic Disadvantage

Lack of financial aid is one of the top contributing factors in the attrition of Black men in HBCUs (Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009; Shorette & Palmer, 2015). It is very common that Black people of low SES status have inherited their economic challenges from as far back as slavery (Kim & Hargrove, 2013). Many of HBCU applicants come from low income homes which minimizes their access to financial resources. HBCU students utilize Pell grants and other
financial assistance programs to finance their collegiate career, which allows them to persist towards completion (Galloway and Swail, 1999; Reid, 2007). Students, in efforts to continue their education, take on outside jobs or lessen the credit hours to meet the financial responsibilities of their institution (Richards & Awokoya, 2012). Black male students have reported that rising tuition along with the decrease in financial aid has burdened their ability to take care of themselves and their families while trying to remain complaint to their tuition payments (Hargrove, 2014).

Hargrove (2014), shed light on how the pressures Black men face while trying to maintain finances negatively impacts grades, performance and eventually interrupts college persistence. Earlier research conferred that Black college student with limited financial resources supplement their funds with loans, and the indebtedness occurred during the collegiate career greatly influences decisions to remain in school (Choy, 2001; Galloway and Swail, 1999). There lies a fear of both dismissal from school because of defaulted loans, and in losing scholarships for having to lessen credit hours to work to maintain good financial standing (Gipson, 2013; Rose, 2009). Thus, Black students chose to leave school to avoid occurring high amounts of debt they worry they will not be able to pay off. The negotiation between avoiding unpayable debt and remaining in school was explained through the Astin’s IEO college completion model as he explained that the inputs of a student may interact with the environment and ultimately influence the outcome.

**Lack of Academic Preparedness**

Richards and Awokoya, (2012) stated academic preparedness and socioeconomic status factors accounted for 51.8% of the Black college student’s persistence to their second year in college. Richards and Awokoya shed light on to the impact academic preparedness and socio-
economic status has on college completion for Black college students. They also stated that the high rates of underprepared college students at HBCUs are abundant because of the propensity for HBCUs to accept lower entry level SAT and ACT scores and grades. Because of lack of preparedness combined with SES struggles, only 30% of Black male college students graduate from HBCUs within 6 years (Gasman, 2013).

Research shows that Black students with low socioeconomic status attend both suburban and urban high schools that have less resources than White and Asian counterparts and are more likely to be underprepared for college due to the lack of resources provided to them (Richards & Awokoya, 2012). Richards and Awokoya also found that the higher the poverty level of the school district, the less likely the school was to hire experienced teachers and acquire quality resources for the students. They infer that lack of quality preparation influences test scores such as the SAT and ACT, which impacts college decisions. Insufficient academic preparedness negatively influences academic performance, aspirations and self-perception of abilities for Black students as they transition from high school to post-secondary education (Choy, 2001; Goings, 2016).

University faculty perceptions of Black student’s academic preparedness plays a role as well (Reid, 2007). The relationship between faculty and student may be negatively impacted if faculty views the Black student as underprepared, incompetent and disadvantaged. The perception may limit communication and expectation. Because of low expectations from faculty, Blacks students then feel a less capable and carry out a self-fulfilling prophecy (Brown, 1995; Reid, 2007). In a study done by Steele (2003), when Black students had faculty members that communicated high standards and affirmation, they were more motivated and responded better to feedback. In an HBCU, because many students are accepted with lower test scores (Reid, 2007)
there is an expectation that students may operate at a lower performance level, therefore enacting the myth of homogeny. The myth of homogeny is when it is assumed that all black students are underprepared and undermotivated (Brown, 1995). Young Black boys are more likely to attend schools that have higher rated of expulsion, suspension and special education programs; their education is greatly impacted by these factors (Xanthos, Treadwell, & Holden, 2010). Xanthos et. al. (2010) purport that society’s negative perceptions of Black males play a role in their health and functionality in society; this notion may provide insight into the disparity between Black men and Black women college completion.

**Gender Characteristics**

Universities struggle with gender imbalance as women continue to outnumber men in enrollment and completion overall (Gasman, 2014). At HBCUs, 7 out of 10 graduates are women (Gasman, 2013; Gasman, Wagner, Ransom & Bowman, 2010; Stayhorn, 2010). The top graduating HBCU is an all-woman college named Spellman University (Journal of Black Education, 2007). The highest graduation rate in a co-ed HBCU is 64 percent at Howard University, with women outnumbering men (The Journal of Black in Higher Education, 2012). HBCU’s provide a supportive environment and racial homogeneity contributes to Black male student’s connectedness to the campus and their studies. However, there still is a disparity for retention for Black males.

**Emotional Intelligence.** Some researchers explain that gap between Black male and female graduated rates relate to emotional intelligence (Kim & Hargrove, 2013; Morales & Troman, 2010). Emotional intelligence describes the noncognitive abilities and skills that assist a person with positively coping with external stressors and expectations (Morales, 2010). Studies have found that overall, women have higher emotional intelligence than males (Walsh-Portillo,
Emotional intelligence has also been identified as a factor for successful college completion for students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds (Vela, 2004, Walker, 2006; Westphal, 2007). When college students experience a higher emotional intelligence, they are better able to utilize campus resources, handle difficult subject material and navigate social and financial challenges that occur during degree pursuit (Grissette Banks, 2014). Those with low emotional intelligence struggle more with utilizing their resources more effectively and being resilient through the college process (Morales & Trotman, 2010). Since the literature provided has suggested that Black males have lower emotional intelligence than Black females (Joseph & Newman, 2010), and emotional intelligence is a component of resilience (Morales, 2010; Morales & Trotman; Walsh-Portillo, 2011) the phenomena of the large gap may be explained through the differences in the ability to be resilient in the college setting.

**Resilience Theories**

Resilience has been defined as the ability to thrive in the face of adversity, (Mu’uim, 2010). Resilience has also been defined by various researchers as the positive adaptation and recovery process after an experienced stressor (Garmezy, 1974,1991; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2008). Norman Garmezy was the pioneer for the study of resilience. He found that risk factors and stressors children face do not determine how well a child adapts, but protective factors were highly correlated with adapted functioning and resilience (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Garmezy 1991a,1991b). He highlighted the importance of adopted protective factors and their roles in helping the process of overcoming adversity.

Garmezy (1971,1991) purported that individual factors, familial factors and supportive factors influence resilience. Individual factors describe personal characteristics such as
temperament and cognitive abilities; familial factors describe family cohesion and connectedness with parents or caretaker; and supportive factors include churches, school staff, social workers and any other resource outside of the family (Garmezy et. al, 1984). Garmezy and colleagues also established three models to help conceptualize resilience; Compensatory model, Protective vs. Vulnerability model and the Challenge model (1984). The Compensatory model explains that if a person is lacking in one area, they may be able to compensate in an area of their life in which they are satisfied to help them through stressors. In the Protective vs. Vulnerability Model, high levels of stress are more likely to diminish if some of the protective factors are there to buffer (i.e, individual attribute, family, and support). Lastly, the Challenge model explains that stress brings out the resourceful nature of the person, meaning that the person searches harder for ways to cope and pull through their situation. The models address the responses a person has in their attempts to overcome their risk factors and adversity; there are populations who must immerse themselves in these processes more often than others due to the societal impacts on their experiences (Kim & Hatgrove, 2013; Sudarkasa, 1997)

Resilience in Black Americans

Because Black Americans have been disproportionally exposed to risk factors such as economical struggles, limited resources, neighborhood violence, drug abuse and racism (Estrada et.al, 2012), they are hypothesized to develop maladaptive coping or pathology from such exposure (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). However, not all Black people develop maladaptive coping or become pathologized from their risk factors, and this is because protective factors are created to buffer the stressors from the environment in those who are resilient (Mu’min, 2010; Hubbard, 2001). Culture plays a role in resilience for Black people (Sudarkasa, 1997). Sudarkasa noted that cultural values established through family has helped with guiding Black people under
distress towards a resilient outcome. Sudarkasa identified seven cultural values that contribute to Black resilience which are respect, responsibility, reciprocity, restraint, reverence, reason and reconciliation, and while not all Black families have these values, these have been the factors that have helped the Black family survive through their plight in America.

Ungar (2004) stated that for minority cultures, identity of self and culture adherence were essential parts of resilience because minorities must navigate their oppressive environments to find the resources they need to be healthy individuals. Ungar (2004) identified seven tensions for resilience through research; access to resources, relationships, identity, power and control, social justice, cultural adherence, and cohesion. The tensions are challenges to resilience. Ungar posited that all cultures face the seven tensions to resilience, but they deal with these tensions in culturally specific ways. He also stated that it is unfair to place full responsibility on the “victim in a toxic environment” to be resilient and that it is fairer to look at how intense the environment is on the adolescent, and then examine the person’s interaction with that environment. Examining both the environment as well as the persons interaction with their environment has been an essential piece for research in Black resilience because it considers how the Black person identifies themselves within the context of their environment and how that identity influences their responses to risk factors (Sudaskasa, 1997; Ungar, 2004.)

**Academic Resilience of Black Males**

While there are studies that address how navigating large proportions of risk factors negatively impacts Black male’s perseverance and social progression (Bell, 2010; Calloway, 2006; Ertada et al. 2012; Hargrove, 2014; Morales, 2010; Reid, 2007), there are Black males who complete their college degrees by persisting through challenges they face (Berwise, 2015; Hargrove, 2014). Academic resilience can be defined as “the process and results that are
part of the life story of an individual who has been academically successful, despite obstacles that prevent majority of others with the same background from succeeding” (Morales & Trotman, 2004, p. 8). For Black students, cultural specific protective factors and racial identity and racial socialization are pivotal in the process of resilience (Brown 2008; Miller and Macintosh, 1999). The negotiation between culturized self and the environment plays a major role in the completion of college (Astin, 1984, 1999; Padilla, 1999; Tinto, 1993.)

In a study done by Wilson-Sadberry, Windfeild, and Royster (1991), resilience was examined through the identification of protective factors of Black males who persisted through college and successfully obtained their degree. The study found that socioeconomic status, familial and peer influence, educational preparation, and postsecondary plans were factors that bolstered persistence to college completion for Black males. Contrary to more recent studies that state the socioeconomic status may be a hindrance to Black Males college journey (Bethell, 2013; Bornstein & Bradley, 2003; Gipson, 2013), Wilson et. al’s (1991) research showed that many of their participants who obtained their college degrees came from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It is unclear why financial status appears to be prominent issue for attrition of Black men in more recent time according to the research provided above. However, there is an increase of studies that examine factors that assist with persistence to graduation.

A study done by Morales (2010) identified 2 clusters of protective factors for Black male college students that helped them be resilient and obtain successful academic outcomes. The first cluster included “willingness/desire to class jump, caring school personnel, sense of obligation to one’s race/ethnicity, and strong future orientation; the second cluster included strong work ethic, persistence, high self-esteem, internal locus of control, attendance at out zone school, high parental expectations supported by words and actions, and mother modeling strong work ethic.
Morales found that the two cultures worked together to create strong academic resilience. Like Wilson et. al (1991), Morales (2010) also identified the mother as playing a major role in Black males’ academic resiliency. It appears that Black males must utilize many resources in conjunction with one another, both internal and external to establish the process of resilience in the college environment.

Morales and Troutman’s (2011) Resilience Cycle Theory discusses the process of resilience while simultaneously navigating and discovering protective factors and pursuing a college degree. There are 5 “spokes” included in this cycle; Spoke one is when one recognizes needs and challenges; Spoke two is when one utilizes protective factors to be successful in academic pursuits; Spoke three is when the process of the protective factor work to the students’ advantage; Spoke four is the acquisition of self-efficacy and Spoke five is enduring motivation. The five Spokes cycle around the emotional intelligence HUB, which describes the skill and ability to manage oneself, handle stress, control impulses and effective decision-making skills.

As previously mentioned, culture influences how one navigates and maintains the resilient process, especially for Black males, who also must consider their values on masculinity in conjunction with their racial identity (Hammond, 2012; Ungar, 2004). As previously mentioned, Morales and Trotman (2011), state women rate high on emotional intelligent tests; in theory, this fact may explain the higher graduation rates for Black women over Black men. However, the cultural protective factors for Black males, provide some insight into how successful Black male college graduates persisted in the face of an extensive amount of risk factors in the societal and college environment.
Summary

In sum, many bodies of literature highlight the disparity among Black male college student’s graduation rates in comparison to their counterparts in both PWIs and HBCUs. The remnants of Black Americans historical plight in America continues to serve as risk factors for Black males as they attempt to persist through college. Researchers have attempted to explain attrition by asserting that the over exposure to risk factors Black men experience contribute to their performance in college. Other researchers found that risk factors (i.e low socio-economic status, racism, low community support) and socio-political environment also contribute to attrition and negative, or low, racial identity. This literature review explored how negative racial identity and self-esteem serve as barriers while positive racial identity and resilience serve as protective factors from environmental stressors. However, no literature has explored both racial identity and resilience of Black males who have persisted to graduation while navigating through over-exposure to risk factors in comparison to Black male college students who do not complete their college education. This study seeks to examine the relationship with racial identity, resilience and college completion in Black male college students to fill the literary gap.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study addressed the dearth in literature regarding the racial identity and resilience in Black males who have/will complete college and Black males who have attended college but did not reach degree completion. The methodology was designed to compare racial identity and resilience of college graduates versus non-graduates. The Conner Davidson-Resilience Scale-10 and the Cross Racial Identify Scale were utilized to gather data on the variables and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. College completion is defined as the meeting of academic criteria at a 4-year university and incompletion is defined as discontinuing college education at a 4-year university before academic criteria was met (“Bachelor Degree”, 2018). Results were gathered and discussed to further explore the implications of the data.

Participants

Participants were Black male college students who attended a 4-year university, seeking a bachelor degree, between the ages of 18-25, and either met all academic requirements for graduation or did not. Participants were considered full time, traditional students. Traditional students range between the ages 18-23 (Pelletier, 2010), and capture the late adolescent/early adulthood developmental stage discussed in the literature review. Because current age was not an exclusionary criteria, the age of participants ranged from 18 to over 49. Yet, older participants met criteria if they attended college between 18-25 years of age. Participants also self-identified as a member of the Black race and identified as a male. Exclusion criteria disqualified those who could participate in the graduation ceremony but did not fulfilled the academic requirements.

Sampling

Participants were sampled from a 4 year university in the Midwest region of America.
Participants were recruited from college campuses through flyers and emails. Participants were also recruited through Listserv email service. The researcher used convenience sampling and filtered participants based on the criteria qualifications. Because part of this study attempted to explore a population that may be sparse in its setting, and due to limited financial and technological resources, simple random sampling is not an option.

Participants who did not graduate were recruited from the community in a city in the Midwest region through volunteer sampling and snowball sampling. Flyers were posted in coffee shops, grocery stores, post offices, laundry facilities with the business’s approval. The flyer was also posted on social media such as Facebook and Instagram.

**Sample Size.** The was a total sample size of \( n=118 \), but \( n=100 \) completed both surveys which was used for data analyses. In order to estimate a reasonable level of statistical power capable of detecting differences for a medium effect size, there was an estimated minimum of 78 participants in the sample size total. This sample size was generated using an online tool (Soper, 2018) given a 0.5 Cohen’s \( d \), a desired statistical power of .7 and a probability level of .05. There was \( n=74 \) participants who graduated from college and \( n=26 \) who did attended college but did not graduate. The discrepancy between the graduate and nongraduate groups were the large gap in sample size difference, which added limitations to the statistical analysis assumptions and generalizability of the findings.

**Demographics**

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) scale provided a demographic section that was utilized in this study. Certain demographic questions from the original scale were not utilized in effort to protect the anonymity of participants. The demographic sections that were utilized included: age, race, racial composition of university, religion importance and religious activity
attendance, income, type of neighborhood and racial composition of neighborhood, family SES, mental and physical health status, and parental college education achievement. In this section, demographic information for participants was provided to highlight trends of the entire population (n=100). Group specific demographics were also reported for both non-graduates and graduates to highlight trends within the groups.

**Population Demographics.** There was a total of n=100 participants, and of the total population, 6% were between the ages 18-25, 78% between the ages 23-35, 13% between the ages of 35-49, and 3% were 49 and older. Of all participants n=100, 84% of their parents had a college degree. The racial makeup of all participants was as follows: African 3%, African American (from African with American citizenship) 30%, Black 58%, West Indian/Caribbean 3%, Hispanic-Black 0%, Mixed 4%, and Other 2%. Of the 100 participants, 20% reported that they attended mostly Black universities, 50% predominantly White universities, and 30% mixed universities. Regarding religious activity attendance, 26% reported that they seldom attend, 29% reported they sometimes attend, 20% reported that they often attend, and 25% reported that they do not attend at all.

Of all the participants, 27% stated that religion is not important to them, 28% reported somewhat important, and 35% reported that religion is very important. Less than 3% of participants reported an annual income less than $10,000 a year, 5% reported $10,000-$20,000, 11% reported $20,000-$30,000, 18% reported $30,000-$40,000, 16% reported $40,000-$60,000, and 47% reported $60,000 and up. Nine percent of the population (n= 9) reported that their family socioeconomic status was poor, 39% reported working class, 45% reported middle class, 7% reported upper-middle class, and 0% reported wealthy. Regarding mental health, 0% reported very poor mental health, 7% reported poor mental health, 33% reported fair mental health, 36% reported good mental health, and 24% reported very good mental health. For physical health, 0% percent
reported very poor psychical health, 8% reported poor physical health, 27% reported fair physical health, 49% reported good physical health, and 16% reported very good physical health.

**Between Group Demographics.** Table 1.1 demonstrated the between group demographic comparison. Results showed that 1.0% non-graduates and 5.0% graduates fell in the 18-25 age range, 21.0% nongraduates and 27.0% of graduates fell in the 25-32 age range, 2.0% non-graduates and 11.0% graduates fell in the 32-49 age range, and 2.0% non-graduates and 1.0% graduates fell the 49 and older range. One percent of nongraduates and 2.0% graduates reported that they were African, 7.0% non-graduates and 23.0% graduates reported African-American (from Africa with American Citizenship), 12/0% non-graduates and 46% graduates reported Black, 4.0% non-graduates and 0.0% graduates reported Mixed, 2.0% non-graduates and 0.0% graduates reported other, lastly 0.0% non-graduates and 3.0% graduates reported West Indian/Caribbean. One percent non-graduates and 19.0% graduates reported that they attended mostly Black universities, 39.0% nongraduates and 41.0% graduates attended mostly White universities, and 16.0% non-graduates and 14.0% graduates attended universities with a mixed racial composition. Regarding religious importance, 2.0% non-graduates and 25.0% graduates reported that religion is not important to them, 19% non-graduates and 19% graduates reported somewhat important, 5.0% non-graduates and 30.0% graduates reported very important. Ten of the non-graduates (10.0%) and 15.0% graduates reported that they do not attend religious services, 7.0% non-graduates and 21.0% graduates reported that they seldomly attend religious services, 7.0% non-graduates 28.0% graduates reported that the attend religious services sometimes, lastly there were 2.0% non-graduates and 18% graduates reported that they attend religions services often.

None of the non-graduates (0.0%) and 3.0% graduates reported making less than $10,000 a year for their annual income, 5.0% non-graduates and 0.0% graduates reported making between
$10,000-$20,000 annually, 6.0% non-graduates and 5.0% graduates reported making $20-000-$30,000 annually, 8.0% non-graduates and 10% graduates reported making $30,000- $40,000 annually, 2.0% non-graduates and 14.0% graduates reported making $40,000-$60,000 and 5.0% non-graduates and 42.0% graduates reported making $60,000 and up annually. As for type of neighborhood, 2.0% non-graduates and 4.0% graduates grew up in rural areas, 6.0% non-graduates and 27.0% graduates grew up in suburban areas, and 18.0% non-graduates and 43% graduates grew up in urban areas.

Two non-graduate participants (2.0%) and 9.0% graduates reported that the neighborhood in which they were raised was composed of mostly White people, 21.0% non-graduates and 50.0% graduates reported growing up in mostly Black neighborhoods, and 3.0% non-graduates and 15.0% graduates reported a mixed composition of races in their neighborhoods. Three non-graduates (3.0%) and six (6.0%) graduates reported that their families would be considered poor, 12.0% non-graduates and 27.0% graduates reported that their families are of working class, 10.0% non-graduates and 35% graduates reported that their families are middle class, and 1.0% non-graduates and 6.0% graduates reported upper class, no one reported wealthy. Three non-graduate participants (3.0%) non-graduates and four (4.0%) graduates reported that they have poor mental health, 8.0% non-graduates and 25.0% graduates reported fair mental health, 11.0% non-graduates and 25.0% graduates reported good mental health, and 4.0% non-graduates and 20.0% graduates reported very good mental health. Finally, 2.0% non-graduates and 6.0% graduates reported poor physical health, 8.0% non-graduates and 19.0% graduates reported fair physical health, 12.0% non-graduates and 37.0% graduates reported good physical health, and 4.0% non-graduates and 12.0% graduates reported very good physical health.
Table 1.1

**Sample Demographics**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Graduates (%)</th>
<th>Graduates (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>20,000-30,000</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-40,000</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-60,000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000+</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Type</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Racial Composition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly White</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Black</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within Group Demographics: Non-Graduates. The non-graduate group had a sample size of n=26. Within the non-graduate group (n=26), 3.8% fell in the 18-25 age range, 80.8% fell in the 25-32 age range, 7.7% fell in the 32-49 age range, and 8% fell the 49 and older range. Three percent reported that they were African, 27% African-American (from Africa with American Citizenship), 46% Black, 15% Mixed and 8% other. Of the 26 non-graduate participants, 3.8% reported that they attended mostly Black universities, 34.6% attended mostly White universities, and 61.5 percent attended universities with a mixed racial composition. Regarding religious importance, 46.2% reported that religion is not important to them, 34.6 % reported somewhat important and 19.2% reported very important. Ten of the non-graduates (38.5%) reported that they do not attend religious services, 26.9% reported that they seldomly attend religious services and 26.9% of them reported that the attend religious services often.

None of the non-graduate (n= 26) participants reported making less than $10,000 a year for their annual income, 19.2% reported making between $10,000-$20,000 annually, 23.1%
reported making $20,000-$30,000 annually, 30.8% reported making $30,000- $40,000 annually, 7.7% reported making $40,000-$60,000 and 19.2% reported making $60,000 and up annually. As for type of neighborhood, 7.7% grew up in rural areas, 23.1% grew up in suburban areas, and 69.2 percent group up in urban areas. Two non-graduate participants (7.7%) reported that the neighborhood in which they were raised was composed of mostly White people, 80.0% reported growing up in mostly Black neighborhoods, and 11.5% reported a mixed composition of races in their neighborhoods. Three of the participants (11.5%) reported that their families would be considered poor, 46.2% reported that their families are of working class, 38.5% reported that their families are middle class, and 3.8% reported upper class. Three non-graduate participants (11.5%) reported that they have poor mental health, 30.8% reported fair mental health, 42.3% reported good mental health, and 15.4% reported very good mental health. Finally, 7.7% reported poor physical health, 30.8% reported fair physical health, 46.2% reported good physical health, and 15.4% reported very good physical health.

**Within Group Demographics: Graduates.** The graduate group had a sample size of n=74. Within the graduate group, 6.7% of participants fell between the ages of 18-25, 77% fell between the 25-32 age range, 14.9% were between the 32-29 age range, and 1.3% fell were 49 or older. The ethnic composition of the graduate participants (n=74) were as follows: 2.7% African, 31.0% African-American (from Africa with American citizenship), 62.1% Black, 4.0% West Indies/Caribbean-Black, 0% Mixed, and 0% Other. Of the graduate participants (n=74), 25.7% attended mostly Black universities, 55.4% attended mostly White universities, and 18.9% attended mixed race universities. Regarding importance of religion, 33.7% reported that religion was not important to them, 25.6% reported that religion was somewhat important to them, and 43.2% reported that religion was very important to them. Roughly twenty percent of graduates reported
that they do not attend religious services, 28.3% reported that they seldomly attend religious services, 37.8% reported that they sometimes attend religious services, and 24.3% reported that they attend religious services very often.

Three participants within the graduate sample (4.0%) reported making less than $10,000 for yearly annual income, 0% reported earning between $10,000-$20,000, 6.8% reported earning $20,000-$30,000, 13.5% reported $30,000-$40,000, 18.9% reported $40,000-$60,000, and 56.8% reported earning $60,000 and higher. Four graduates (5.4%) reported that they were raised in rural neighborhoods, 36.4% reported being raised in the suburbs, and 58.1% reported being raised in urban neighborhoods. Nine graduates (12.1%) reported the racial composition of their primary neighborhoods was mostly White, 67.5% reported mostly Black, and 20.2% reported that their primary neighborhoods were of mixed-race composition. Participants (n=6) from the graduate sample identified their family as poor, 36.4% reported that their family was in the working class, 47.2% reported that their family was in the middle class, 8.1% reported that their families were in the upper-middle class, and none of the participants reported that their families were wealthy. Four graduates (5.4%) identified their mental health as poor, 33.8% as fair, 33.8% as good, and 27.0% as very good. Regarding physical health, 8.1% reported poor, 25.7% reported fair, 50.0% reported good, and 12.3% reported very good.

**Instruments**

Instruments were chosen based on the constructs that were addressed in this study. The Cross Racial Identity Scale helps to explore racial identity by providing a racial identity profile, which provides in depth understanding of the persons racial identity. The Conner-Davison Resilience Scale explores constructs that help create the idea of resilience and provides a comprehensive understanding of a person’s resilience level. Within this section, reliability and
validity statistics were provided for both scales.

**Cross Racial Identity Scale**

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) (Vandiver, Cross, Fhagen-Smith, Worrell, Swim, & Caldwell, 2000) was developed based on the original Nigrescence Theory-Original (NT-O) model and adjusted for the Nigrescence Theory-Expanded NT-E (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Over the course of five years (1995-2000), CRIS underwent five phases of adjustment to the items of the scale (Worrell, Mendoza-Denton, Telesford, Crystal Simmons & Martin, 2011). The CRIS is a 30-item instrument that measures six of the eight Nigrescence attitudes (e.g. Preencounter Assimilation, Preencounter Miseducation, Preencounter Self-Hatred, Immersion–Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Vandiver et al., 2002). The Immersion–Emersion Intense Black Involvement subscale was not included in the result because of its empirical instability.

**Reliability.** Vandiver and colleagues (2002) reported Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .78 to .89 using a sample of 309. Worrell et al., (2004) reported Cronbach’s alpha estimates ranged from .70 to .85 in a sample of 105 Black American adults (M age = 34). Reliability estimates in other college samples have ranged from .74 to .89 (Cokley, 2002; Helm, 2002; White, 2002; Wright, 2003) which communicates medium to high reliability within the scale.

**Validity.** Vandiver et al., (2000) validated the CRIS by performing four studies each with college students. The first study contained 296 African American undergraduate and graduate students at a PWI. Results yielded Alpha coefficients of .76 to .89. In the second study, there were 336 Black American students at a PWI, and 309 participants’ information was utilized for results which yielded alpha scores of .78 to .89. Convergent validity was tested by examining the relationship between subscales of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI,
Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998) and the CRIS using both bivariate and canonical correlations. Canonical correlations were used to account for the multidimensional qualities of the subscales for each instrument. The MIBI subscales are Assimilation, Centrality, Humanist, Nationalist, Oppressed Minority, Private Regard, and Public Regard and the CRIS subscales are Self-hate, Anti-White, Assimilation, Miseducation, Afrocentric and Multiculturalist. Results from both the bivariate and canonical correlations supported the CRIS subscales. Other studies were performed to help solidify validity for the remaining items on the psychometric properties of the scores (Vandiver, et al., 2002; Vandiver, et al., 2001). The alpha coefficients communicate high validity because .7 is indication for an acceptable score, which means the CRIS is accurately measuring the intended constructs within racial identity.

**Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale**

The Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) measure resilience (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007). Resilience is defined as the capacity to face adversity (Conner & Davidson, 2003). Resilience has been associated with personal characteristics such as hardiness, mental toughness and self-efficacy. Hardiness is comprised of commitment, control and challenge (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi, 2002). Self-efficacy was defined by Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) as the belief in one’s own abilities to complete specific tasks and how well they will execute those tasks. The CD-RISC items examine the aforementioned areas associated with resilience. The CD-RISC 10 is a shortened version of the original 25-item CD-RISC (Conner & Davidson, 2003), and assesses personality, stress, and coping skills. The items are ranked on a 5 point-Likert scale with scores from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (nearly true all the time). The maximum score is 40 on the scale after summing all of the items and there are not reverse score items. A high score represents high resilience. The respondents complete the scale based on the degree to
which they admit each item on the scale was applicable to them in the preceding 1 month.

**Normative data.** The CD-RISC 10 was normed on diverse populations with one of the populations being undergraduate college students; n=1,622 (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007). The scale was normed on mostly White female college students, however further research explored other populations and confirmed the scaled superiority with regards to validity and reliability to other resilience scales (Burns & Anstey, 2010; Coates, Phares, & Dedrick, 2013; Gucciardi et al., 2011).

**Reliability.** Studies reported that the internal consistency of the CD-RISC 10 range between .75 to .91 (Goins, Gregg, & Fiskes, 2012, Klasan, Oettingen, Daniels, Post, Hoyer, & Adam, 2010; Wang, Shi, Zhang, & Zhang, 2010). Wang et. al., (2010) also found that test-retest had a r=.90 in their study on assessing the resiliency in earth quake survivors. Since reliability of .7 and up indicated high reliability, the previous studies discussed show that the CD-RISC is a highly reliable scale.

**Validity.** Coates, Phares, and Dedrick (2013) reported convergent validity in low-income Black males and reported a high correlation between resilience and spirituality examined by the Religious Well-Being Scale (RWB) which is also a 10-item subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991); results were r = .60, p<.001 and these results purport statistical significance within the relationship between the two variables. Hartley (2012) performed a study on college students where resilience positively correlated on their perceptions of their mental health that were recruited from mental health offices (r= .34, p < .001) and their social supports (r= .40). Other research also explored the validity of the CD-RISC and report an adequate r (Goins, Gregg, & Fiskes, 2012; Grattan, Roberts, Mahan, McLaughlin, Otwell, & Morris, 2011). The results from the research studies examined in this section all confirm
statistical significance, i.e. p<.05, as it pertains to the constructs they were measuring resilience against, which confirms the validity of the CD-RISC scale.

**Procedures**

Because the study consisted of human subjects, the researcher requested approval from Governors State University’s (GSU) Institutional Review Board regarding the study. Once the study was approved by GSU’s Institutional Review Board the researcher began recruitment for the study. Recruitment took place via flyers on student activity boards, emails, and student organizations with predominately Black American students. The flyer and link to the scales were also posted to various social media sites (i.e. Facebook and Instagram).

For participants who did not fulfill academic criteria, there was a different recruitment process. Flyers were be posted in coffee shops, post offices, grocery stores, various small business areas with their permission. Flyers were also posted on social media with the link to the survey that contained the scales attached. Participants were put into a drawing for 100-dollar amazon gift card for completing all necessary components of the study. Incomplete participation excluded participants from entering the drawing, and their data was not utilized in the study.

The researcher communicated that the criteria to participate included graduation or dropout from 4-year university while seeing a bachelor’s degree between the ages 18-25, and that participants must identify as a Black male. It was also communicated that current age does not matter as long as their college graduation or discontinuation occurred between the ages of 18-25. The researcher specified that participation in a graduation ceremony without meeting academic criteria for completion was exclusion criteria, and thus not eligible for the study. The researcher communicated that participation was voluntary and would not influence academic standing in any way if they were still in college anticipating their graduation.
Upon clicking the link to the scales, participants were presented with the consent form approved by the IRB. Participants were able to continue to the scales by indicating that they acknowledge and understand the study’s requirements and give consent to the researcher. Participants who did not indicate consent were taken to a disqualification page on Survey Monkey and were not allowed to participate. The consent form informed all participants of the purpose of the study, their role as a participant, and their right to discontinue or refuse certain questions. The researcher shared that the completion of the Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CRIS) and Cross Racial Identity Scale 9 (CD-RISC 10) would take on average 10-15 minutes total and that incomplete surveys would not count towards the research.

The instruments, CRIS and CD-RISC 10, were administered electronically on Survey Monkey. At the end of the scales, on the thank you page, the researcher provided the email address participants should reach out to if they wanted to be entered in the $100 amazon gift card raffle along with the referral sources to mental health therapists if they feel the need for further assistance. All data collected was stored on a password protected computer and a password protected USB drive. The researcher also stored other data in her home in a locked drawer.

Those who inquired about the raffle were assigned a number in the order that they entered the raffle. The researcher replied to the emails individually with a confirmation of receipt and informed them that they were entered in the raffle. The researcher used www.randompick.com to choose a random number by entering the number of those who entered the raffle. The winner was contacted via email with the Amazon Gift Card attached to the email. Those who did not win were emailed stating that they did not win the raffle.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To
investigate the research questions, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare Graduates and Non-Graduates’ racial identity scores on the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) and then to compare Graduates and Non-Graduates’ resilience scores on the Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) to assess for any statistically significant relationships between groups. Descriptive statistics were performed and provided mean scores of the resilience scales and racial identity attitude subscales. A Chi-Square Test for Independence was performed to explore demographic relationships between groups. The independent sample t-test was an appropriate statistic for the hypothesis because it allowed the researcher to explore statistical significance between group scores from all of the racial identity attitudes and the resilience scale and determine if there was any difference between the groups.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine the relationship between racial identity, resilience, and college completion for Black males. Based on the literature review, it was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant relationship between the racial identity attitude scores of Black male college graduates and Black males who did not complete college. A second hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant relationship between resilience scores for black male college graduates and black male non-graduates. The researcher implemented the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) and the Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) to examine the variables.

Descriptive statistics were performed for racial identity attitudes (Table 3.1) and in Table for resilience (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2), which includes both levels of the independent variable, those who graduated, and non-graduates. An independent samples T-test was used on each of the subscales in the CRIS to identify the means of racial identity attitudes of each level of the independent variable, graduates, and non-graduates. An independent samples T-test was also conducted between groups on the CD-RISC 10 to identify the mean scores on resilience. Demographic information was gathered for all participants to provide further insight into participant trends. Post-Hoc Values resulted in a Cohen’s $d$ of 0.5 and a $p= 0.5$ with a sample size of $N=100$ the observed power level was a .07.

A Chi-Square test of independence was calculated to compare the frequencies of mental health status, religious attendance, and school racial composition between Black male college graduates and Black male non-graduates. No significant interaction was found between mental health and college graduates versus non-graduates $\chi^2(3, N = 100) = 1.95$, $p = .588$ as shown in Table 2.1. Religious attendance also yielded no significant interaction $\chi^2(3, N = 100) = 6.18$, $p =$
.103 as presented in Table 2.2. However, there was a significant interaction found between the graduate versus non-graduate groups for school racial composition: $\chi^2(2, N = 100) = 17.60, p = .000$ (Table 2.3). The other demographics’ sample sizes were too small and violated the Chi-Square assumption. Therefore, those results were not accurate nor were they included in the reports of this study.

Table 2.1

*Chi-Square Test of Independence for Mental Health and Graduates/Non-Graduates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>1.957a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>1.906</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.82.
Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

The researcher cleaned the data by excluding incomplete surveys, which resulted in a

Table 2.2

Chi-Square Test of Independence for Religious Attendance and Graduates/Non-Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>5.407a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>5.893</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>5.201</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of Valid Cases 100

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.46.

Table 2.3

Chi-Square test of Independence for School Racial Composition and Graduates/Non-Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>17.602a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>17.516</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>15.597</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of Valid Cases 100

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.68.
total of 18 discarded responses and left a sample population of n=100. The sample size (n=100) was utilized to analyze the results. Outlier scores were observed within four of the six racial identity attitude scores and in one participant in the resilience scores. Participants 16 and 30 scored a 35 and a 19 on the Assimilation attitude subscale ($M=11.0, SD=6.71$). Participants 16 and 30 were a part of the graduate group. Participants 37 and 60 scored the maximum of 35 in Self-Hate attitude ($M=9.93, SD=6.85$), both participants were a part of the graduate group. Graduate participants 1 and 60 scored a 35 and a 29 ($M=10.73, SD=6.13$), and non-graduate participant 79 scored a 35 ($M=12.27, SD=8.14$) on the Anti-White attitude. There were two graduate participants, 1 and 6, who scored an eight and a seven ($M=26.97, SD=6.66$) and two non-graduate participants, 78 and 99, who both scored a 14 ($M=26.31, SD=6.21$) on the Multiculturalist racial identity attitude. Only one participant had a score outside of the mean for resilience. Graduate participant 69 scored an 18 on the Resilience scale ($M=31.42, SD=5.10$).

With the exception of participant 1 and 60, all of the participants had one score within their racial identity profile that was outside of the mean and all other scores fell within the mean and provided valuable data to the study. Participant 60 had no outliers within their racial identity profile. Because of the value participants with outliers added, the outliers were kept in the study because they were a genuine part of the data’s distribution.

**Racial Identity Scale Scores.** The results were reported for each subscale on the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The subscales were assimilation, miseducation, self-hatred, anti-white, afro-centric and multiculturalist (Vandiver et. al, 2001). The CRIS technical manual 2nd edition (Worrell, Vandiver & Cross, 2004) stated that the subscales were not to be collapsed into one composite score, so the mean for each subscale was utilized and each subscale was compared between groups. This section
addresses the research question, “Is there a statistically significant relationship between Black Male College graduates and Black male Non-Graduates racial identity attitude scores.” Table 3.1 presents means, standard deviations, skewness, and standards error mean for racial identity attitudes between graduates and non-Graduates.

**Assimilation.** An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare assimilation in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for graduates (\(M=11, SD=6.7\)) and non-graduates (\(M=12.88, SD=8.3\)); \(t(98)=-1.157, p=.250\). Additionally, there was no difference in the assimilation racial identity attitude between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 3.2.

**Miseducation.** An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare miseducation in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not a statistically significant relationship in the miseducation scores for graduates (\(M=14.08, SD=5.99\)) and non-graduates (\(M=14.54, SD=5.24\)); \(t(98)=-.345, p=.731\). There was no difference in the miseducation racial identity attitude scores between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 3.2.

**Self-Hate.** An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-hate in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not a significant difference in self-hate scores for graduates (\(M=9.93, SD=6.8\)) and non-graduates (\(M=10.08, SD=5.67\)); \(t(98)=-.096, p=.923\). There is no difference in the self-hate racial identity attitude between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 3.2.

**Anti-White.** An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare anti-white racial attitude in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not statistically
significant results for the anti-white scores for graduates ($M=10.73$, $SD=6.13$) and non-graduates ($M=12.27$, $SD=8.14$); $t$ (98) -1.007, $p=.316$. The results suggest that there was no difference in the anti-white racial attitude between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 3.2.

**Afrocentric.** An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Afrocentric racial attitudes in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not a statistically significant results for the Afrocentric scores for graduates ($M=19.08$, $SD=7.23$) and non-graduates ($M=20.62$, $SD=7.47$); $t$ (98) -.922, $p=.359$. The results suggested that there was no difference in Afrocentric racial identity attitudes between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 3.2.

**Multiculturalist.** An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the multiculturalist racial attitudes in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not a statistically significant difference in the multiculturalist scores for graduates ($M=26.97$, $SD=6.26$) and non-graduates ($M=26.31$, $SD=6.21$); $t$ (98).445, $p=.657$. The results suggested that there was no difference in multiculturalist racial identity attitudes between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 3.2.
Table 3.1

*Group Statistics for Racial Identity Attitudes for Graduates/Non-Graduates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>6.711</td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradautes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.88</td>
<td>8.272</td>
<td>1.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td>5.248</td>
<td>1.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miseducation</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>5.993</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradautes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td>5.248</td>
<td>1.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td>5.248</td>
<td>1.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self_Hate</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>6.853</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradautes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.08</td>
<td>5.670</td>
<td>1.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.08</td>
<td>5.670</td>
<td>1.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti_White</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>6.136</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradautes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.27</td>
<td>8.142</td>
<td>1.597</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
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<td>12.27</td>
<td>8.142</td>
<td>1.597</td>
</tr>
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<td>Afro_Centric</td>
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<td>19.08</td>
<td>7.239</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradautes</td>
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<td>20.62</td>
<td>7.473</td>
<td>1.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20.62</td>
<td>7.473</td>
<td>1.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalist</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26.97</td>
<td>6.662</td>
<td>.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradautes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26.31</td>
<td>6.215</td>
<td>1.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26.31</td>
<td>6.215</td>
<td>1.219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2

Independent Samples Test of Racial Identity Scores for Graduates and Non-Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Mean Difference</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>3.371</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>1.444</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>1.64</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
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<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
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<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
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<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- F: F-value
- Sig. (2-tailed): Significance level (2-tailed)
- Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: Tests the equality of variances across groups.
- t-test for Equality of Means: Tests the equality of means across groups.
Resilience Scores. The scores from the Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) were able to be combined into one composite score for both groups. The mean score for both groups was analyzed using an independent samples t-test. The research question addressed here is, “Is there a statistically significant relationship between Black Male College Graduates and Black Male Non-Graduates resilience scores”. Resilience means, standard deviation and standard error were explored in Table 4.1 and 4.2 to answer the research question.

Resilience. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare resilience in Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates. There was not a significant difference in Resilience scores for Graduates ($M=31.42, SD=5.104$) and Non-Graduates ($M=32.15, SD=4.46$); $t (98) = -.651, p = .516$. The results suggest that we accept the null hypotheses that there was no difference in Resilience between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates as presented in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>31.42</td>
<td>5.104</td>
<td>.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Graduates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.15</td>
<td>4.460</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2
Independent Samples Test
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resilience</th>
<th>Equal variances assumed</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>-2.974 to 1.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>-0.735</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>1.057</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>1.388</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-0.695</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F-test for Equality of Variances
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances
Independent Samples Test
Conclusion

The results did not yield any statistically significant results between Black male graduates and Black male non-graduates for assimilation, miseducation, self-hate, anti-white, afrocentric, and multiculturalist racial identity attitudes. There also was no statistically significant results between groups for resilience. Based on the results of this study, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that the mean scores on the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) will not be statistically significantly higher for Black Males college graduates than Black males Non-Graduates. The research also fails to reject the null hypothesis for resilience which states that the mean scores on the Conner Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC 10) will not be statistically significantly higher for Black Males college graduates than Black males Non-Graduates.
Chapter 5: Discussion

This study addressed to hypothesis. The first hypothesis for this study was that there would be a statistically significant relationship between Black male college graduate racial identity scores and Black non-college graduate racial identity scores. As discussed in the literature review, the racial identity attitudes included assimilation, miseducation, self-hate, anti-white, afrocentric and multiculturalist (Vandiver et. al, 2001). Results revealed no meaningful differences between Black male’s racial identity attitudes for those who graduated from college and those who did not graduate. The second hypothesis was there would be a statistically significant relationship between Black male graduate’s resilience scores and Black male non-graduate resilience scores. There was no meaningful difference between groups for resilience as well. The results for both variables, racial identity and resilience, differ from what was expected. Interestingly, non-graduates and graduates had similar mean scores across all the racial identity attitude constructs observed within this study and almost identical mean scores for resilience.

Racial Identity Profiles

There were six subscales within the CRIS which were representative of six different racial identity attitudes. The six identity attitudes were individual scores that create a racial identity profile. Racial identity profiles were created for both graduates and non-graduates based on the scores provided from the scales. The total score communicates the degree to which the participants identify with each racial identity attitude. Therefore, as it pertains to the groups, the higher the mean, the more the score identifies with the particular racial identity attitude and vice versa.

Graduates

Within the graduate group, in ascending order, the racial identity attitude profile was as
follows; self-hate starting off as the lowest attitude, anti-white, assimilation, miseducation, afrocentric, and multiculturalist. This profile communicates that the graduate group identifies the most with acceptance of other cultures along with their own. The profile also indicates that negative views on self and other Black people are not as prevalent as literature has suggested (Bell, 2010; Calloway, 2006; Ertada et. al. 2012; Hargrove, 2014; Morales, 2010; Reid, 2007), and would suggest a healthy racial identity based on the Nigrescence model (Cross, 1991, 2001). Healthy racial identity was associated with better mental health and resilience (Cross, 1991). In this study, more than half of graduates reported good or better regarding their mental health, which may mean that Black males are assumed to be more mentally unhealthy than the reality. This latter is important because of possible inaccuracies in Black Male representation in academic literature.

Non-graduates

Within the non-graduate group, in ascending order, the racial identity profile is as follows: Self-Hate, Anti-White, Assimilation, Miseducation, Afrocentric, and Multiculturalist. The non-graduate racial profile is identical to that of the graduates. Just as the graduate racial identity profile, the non-graduate group appears to have acceptance of other cultures while embracing their own as well, which communicates a healthy racial identity based on the Nigrescence model (Cross, 1991). Cross (1991) posited that healthy racial identity was associated with good mental health and resilience, and more than half non-graduates reported good or better regarding mental health. Therefore, this study is in agreement with the literature regarding racial identity and mental health and ultimately it clarifies that there may be a possible misunderstanding of those Black males who drop out of college. Black males may not be dropping out due to personal feelings about race or because of level of resilience, but because of
something unidentified at this point in time.

Both groups, graduates and non-graduates, have identical racial identity profiles and both have more than half of their participants reporting good or better mental health, which means that both groups have a healthy racial identity and healthy mental health status. Therefore, racial identity did not impact college completion rates. By strongly identifying with the multiculturalist racial identity attitude, it can also be purported that each of the groups were not struggling with racism as a part of their narrative (Cross, 1991) and that they have some resilience regarding perceptions of racism. The assumption regarding resilience against racism is based on the nature of the multiculturalist attitude where in order to identity with this attitude, a person has to accept others and themselves past stereotypes and prejudices (Cross, 2001).

**Resilience Profiles**

The Conner-Davidson Resilience 10 (CD-RISC 10) is a 10-item scale and allowed for a total composite score for each group. The results indicated that there was not a difference between the two groups. For interpretation, as the scores on the (CD-RISC 10) increase, so does the level of resilience. Therefore, the higher the mean score for each group, the higher the resilience and vice versa. The means are separated into four quartiles to indicate level of cute off regarding resilience. Scores 0-29 fall within 1st quartiles and indicates low resilience, 30-32 falls within and indicates lower-middle he 2nd, 33-36 fall within the 3rd and indicate an upper-middle and 37-40 is the 4th quartile and indicated high resilience. The quartiles are important to this study because it demonstrated where, in comparison to the normative data, the participants fall and helps determine how healthy or unhealthy their level of resilience is overall. Based on resilience means, Table 2.2 shows both groups fell into the lower-middle quartile. Therefore, the researcher concluded that resilience scores in both graduate and non-graduate groups have
average levels of resilience.

**Group Characteristics**

The information provided from the Chi-Square determined that there was a statistically significant relationship between School Racial Composition and Black male College Graduates and Black male Non-Graduates. The significance level was strong, $\chi^2(2, N = 100) = 17.60, p = .000$ (Table 1.3), which means that it is likely that college completion status is not independent of the racial composition of the university attended. The results showed that there was a high frequency of graduates who attended mostly White universities. Thus, Black males who attended Predominately White Universities/Universities were more likely to graduate. Non-graduates had a high frequency of attendance to mixed schools, and because there was statistical significance, Black males who attended mixed schools were more likely to drop out of college.

**Graduate Demographics.** On average, the graduate sample were 25-32 years of age. The participants identified as Black and over half of the sample attended mostly White universities. This group reported that religion was very important to them and that they sometimes attended religious services. They grew up in mostly Black urban neighborhoods and their family’s SES was classified as middle class. Majority of the Black male college graduates of this study reported making $60,000 and above yearly income. They generally reported fair to good mental health, and they have good physical health. This demographic profile provides many protective factors to the average graduate Black male. Garmezy (1971,1991) stated that individual, family and supportive tools help increase resilience of an individual, therefore Black male graduates have the necessary protective factors to be resilient.

**Non-Graduate Demographics.** The majority of the non-graduate sample were 25-32 years of age and attended mixed ethnicity colleges. The non-graduate group did not find religion
to be important to them and they did not do not attend religious services. They grew up in mostly Black urban committees and families were reported to be in the working class. On average, Non-Graduates in this study earn between $30,000- $40,000 yearly income. They reported good mental and physical health. While the results show that the non-graduates had an average level of resilience, their demographic profile does not afford many of the protective factors Garmezy (1971,1991) stated would help an individual persevere through stressful time. Therefore, Black male college dropouts did not have many protective factors. It calls into question if reports regarding resilience given by non-graduate were honest given the factors of their demographics.

Importance of Within-Group Qualities. The researcher acknowledged that statistical analyses were not completed on financial demographics between groups due to low samples frequencies; however, literature supports that college graduates typically make more money annually than those who do not hold a college degree (Rose, 2011). In this case, the graduates made more annually than non-graduates. Interestingly, while there was no significant relationship between groups regarding religion, literature also confirms that Black men at Predominately White Universities/Institutions embrace religion as a valuable resource regarding resilience (Hargrove, 2013). This study clearly demonstrated within the graduate group; non-graduates tended not to utilize religion as a resource within their group. This study also suggests a connection between religion and college completion. Religion may be an important variable that was not given enough attention in this study and should be further analyzed with more robust statistics and larger samples size. Also, while there was no statically significant relationship between groups for family SES, graduates appeared to have a financially stable family background where are the non-graduates had working class families. Unfortunately, this research does not explore to what extent the family served as a support system so there cannot be
many inferences made from this information. It is important to stress that the previous
information is only highlighting within group qualities that stood out and the only statically
significant relationship between groups was with School Racial Composition,

Confounding Variables

Several confounding variables within the dataset are worthy of discussion. In total, 94%
of all participants were ages 25 and older, and only 6% of the entire population were in the 18-25
age range. This is of particular importance because identity development occurs between 18-25
(Erikson, 1957). The further a person deviates from this age range, the more their identity is
likely to change based on Erikson’s (1957) human developmental model. Therefore, the amount
of time a participant has been outside of the identity versus role confusion developmental stage
may have had an impact on both racial identity profiles and resilience levels. A person who has
resolved their identity versus role confusion stage would not have a negative assessment of self
(Arnett 2000; Arnett, 2001; Arnett, 2003; Erikson, 1980). The older a participant is, the chances
of fully capturing their racial identity profile and resilience level during the time they made
decision regarding persistence to graduation were hindered. In fact, majority of the participants
were theoretically in the intimacy versus isolation stage and should be more focused on
inclusivity or withdrawal from peers and not personal identity.

In addition, the self-reflective nature of the questions may also be a confounding variable.
Many of the questions ask the participant to consider aspects of themselves which may be
assessed positively and negatively and may lead to a more positive self-assessment to avoid
discomfort. Also, the demographic questions required self-reflection on qualities that may be
presumed as achievements and reflection of success. The nature of the demographic assessment
could have also influenced self-perception of resilience and racial identity because the scales
were administered directly afterward.

The sociopolitical climate has also been very tense in social media as well as the mainstream media. There has been a lot of discussion regarding legal policies regarding specific ethnic population regarding deportation and social views America has on people based on their race. There has also been a nationwide movement called Black Lives Matter that protests police brutality under the presumption that Black people are targets by the police. Political conversation and nuances may be a confounding variable that may have had some influence on racial identity attitudes and resilience. Garmezy (1971,1991) stated in his model that the challenge theory explains how extreme pressures pushes people to be more resilient, if the social environment was a confounding variable, this study could be a representation of people being resilient during very challenging times.

**Sampling and Procedural Issues**

This study utilized snowball sampling and convenience sampling. Because of the sampling methods, specially snowball sampling, it is likely that many participants are similar to each other in some way which may explain the homogeneity in the racial identity and resilience means. Regarding procedures, the samples were collected via internet. It was required that all participants had some access to the internet and able to use it effectively enough to complete the scales. Unfortunately, internet access may have excluded people who may not have had access to the internet who could have potentially impacted the outcome of this study.

**Context of Findings**

Theorists suggested that culture plays a role in resilience for Black people and cultural values and tradition impact ability to navigate through distress (Sudarkasa, 1997; Ungar 2004). Literature suggested that during the Black Slave trade in America, Black people had to create
ways to push through adversity and that these qualities may be engrained into Black culture. Therefore, graduates and non-graduates may have had such similar means for resilience due to the fact that every participant identified as a Black person and may possibly share cultural norms and values. Cultural norms that inform resilient patterns of behavior may be present. Due to tense racial climate in American for Black Americans, Black people face many risk factors in various areas of their lives, and in order to adapt, they must utilize protective factors to persevere through distress (Hubbard, 2001; Mu’min, 2010). Graduates and non-graduates within this study may have already had protective factors within their culture that allow them to be resilient independent of college involvement.

Literature suggested that Black male students struggle with college completion at Predominately White Institutions (PWI) (McGaskey, Freeman Guyton, Richmond & Guyton, 2016; Shorette & Palmer, 2015) however, within the graduate group, over half of the sample graduated from a mostly White university. The Black males who graduated from PWI’s, according to the literature, must have some unique protective factors that allow them to persist, however, this study was not able to identify those unique characteristics. The literature also suggests that diversity has been shown to assist with college retention and completion (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), however, within the non-graduate group most attended mixed ethnicity schools but were not able to complete, and this study was not able to identify any unique factors that may have contributed to their attrition.

There was a trend shift within the literature regarding racial identity developmental models, and a turn towards a multicultural identity. Each group scored highest in the multicultural racial identity attitude, which brings into question if the gap in literature a reflection of societies racial identity shift. With regards to the socioeconomic disparity displayed
within the Black community (Williams, 1999), a college education may not be the key to improving social conditions within this context due to the findings of this study. There may possible be another variable that better captures strategies to decrease poverty within the community.

The Nigrescence model purports that healthy racial identity is directly related to level of mental health functioning and ability to navigate stressful environments. Good mental health was observed in both groups based on demographic reports; therefore, those findings were consistent with the theoretical framework. However, if an alternative interpretation of the results were offered concluding that the dropping out of college demonstrated a lack of good mental health then the theory’s assumptions may be challenged, it depends on the perception of dropping out. Non-graduates may be resilient in other areas that were not explored in this study and as previously mentioned, their resilience levels captured in this study may be associated with pushing through challenges that may have been brought on by not obtaining a college education based on the Challenge Theory (Garmezy, 1971;1991). Graduates may also be resilient in other areas other than college; college completion may be a question of ability to persist or decision to persist.

There lies importance in the identical racial identity profiles and nearly identical resilience score between groups. While there were differences in protective factors between groups, it appears that both groups saw themselves as the same. Both groups share in common that they are Black Males. It may be possible that this study assessed the resilience and racial identity of Black males without considering the college attendance variable. If that was the case, then it can be concluded this study’s approach wasn’t the most accurate for exploring how racial identity and resilience may be a deciding factor regarding the disparity in college attrition or
socioeconomic status. However, this study does show that Black men can be resilient and healthy, but still drop out of college, or fall below the poverty line.

Implication of Findings

As previously mentioned, this research study was implemented during a very intense sociopolitical time with various racial issues arriving in society. This research study may highlight the importance of the political climate when assessing racial identity, and the importance of exploring ways to control for, or at least include, the confounding variable when considering instrumentation and methodology. This research study also highlights some methodology issues. The researcher asked for participants to provide their current mindsets and values in efforts to explore past decisions made regarding college persistence. Maturation, the time between graduation or drop-out and now, may include many unforeseen confounding variables which may have impacted the data.

This research may peak interest for colleges and universities who are looking to increase retention for Black males. While the research was not able to identity a variable that distinguishes or predicts attrition or graduation, it does highlight some trends for both groups that may lead into further investigation. For example, as previously mentioned, the racial composition of the school seemed to have importance regarding each group, and both groups also had opposite views on religion which has been seen as a component of college completion in some studies. Also, the aims for this study was to address the gap in literature regarding characteristics of resilient Black male college students, which may appeal to college educators and university recruitment.

This research may also be utilized by mental health therapists who work within the Black community. The literature offers the assumption that those who drop out of college may be
unhappier and suffer more mental health issues due to socio-economic disparity (Farmer & Hairston, 2013; Payne, 2014; Robertson & Mason, 2008), however, this research study shows that Black Males who drop out of college can possess positive racial identity and resilience. This information may assist with positive psychology and recognizing strengths for Black male clients and discussing ways in which they have been resilient through whatever their presenting problems may be or have been in the past.

**Limitations**

This study has several factors that may limit the generalizability of the findings. First, as previously mentioned, the sampling methodology may have been biased due to snow-ball and convenience sample. Also, only those who had internet access were able to participate, so sampling was restrictive in this context. Also because of the large gap in group sample sizes, certain statistical analysis was not able to be performed fully due to low frequencies of reporting within certain variables. This led to a gap in report regarding significant similarities and differences between groups. Perhaps if this were a correlational study, more information could have been explored, however the design of the study limited those explorations. Lack of funding to perform more robust tests such as multivariate analysis to observe any correlations between and within groups may have also left some gaps in the information that could have provided more insight.

A major limitation of this study was the inability to capture more participants while they were in the *identity versus role confusion* stage of development. This is highly important due to the confounding variables previously mentioned. Maturation beyond identity issues could have greatly impacted the outcomes of this study. It was difficult to target participants who had recently graduated or dropped out of school. According to Erikson’s Human Development
Model (1957), many of the participants were in “intimacy versus isolation” stage, which turns the focus onto relationships with others rather self-identity, and this may have also limited the insight into how they may have viewed their racial identity.

Regarding internal validity, this research study was not a “true experiment”, meaning this research did not observe a cause and effect, only if there existed an association between variables. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the independent variable caused any changes in the dependent variable to any degree. While the reliability and validity of both the Cross-Davidson Resilience scale 10 and the Cross Racial Identity Scale were strong, the sample size could have been much larger which would have allowed for more statistical analysis and higher statistical power in the findings.

**Further Recommendations and Future Research**

This research sought out to fill in the gap in literature regarding Black male college graduates and to explore any relationships or lack thereof between Black male college graduate and Black males who did not graduate regarding racial identity and resilience. While there were no significant relationships observed between any of the variables, the results did highlight some recommendations and other areas that may need to be further explored. Also, if this research study was duplicated it would be recommended that a much larger samples size be used to explore the demographics characteristics of each group.

Future studies may should choose to approach this topic using qualitative methodology for more in-depth information, which would provide more insight into the individuals experiences during college and reasons for persisting or ceasing to persist. In addition, to more accurately measure resilience and it pertains to college, a different scale should be used. The scale that was utilized measured resilience in general and not specific to any specific situation or
event. Finding an academic resilience scale may be more appropriate. Further exploration may include the generation of college attendance. As previously mentioned, 86% of all participants had parents who earned at least Bachelor’s degrees, so future studies want to be more intentional about including those who are first generation and see if there are any differences between the groups regarding resilience.

An interesting direction to take regarding the results of this study would be to further explore if resilience factors are a part of “Black culture” for college students. Literature suggested that it is the case that protective factors are present within Black culture, but the study was done over 20 years ago and within the current political climate, it may be of some benefit to see if there have been any changes. A longitudinal study may be appropriate for that observation.

**Conclusion**

There is much to learn from this study regarding Black men. Regardless of the condition, college graduation and college dropout, Black men seem to reflect upon themselves positively, and affirm a healthy racial identity and resilience. Black men in America, in general, have experienced many negative challenges in the face of racism and unfair treatment. They experience generational poverty, which creates difficulty with social mobility. It is also true that not all Black men experience lack, nor do they make racism a part of their narrative. Either way, Black identity may have resilience included within its culture, which is why the results of this study between groups appeared to be so similar. Ultimately, as it pertains to college completion, there may be other avenues that will better explain the differences between Black males who graduate and those who do not. The disparity in college attrition for Black males is still an issue and needs to be further explored, to further peer into solutions to address socioeconomic stagnation of the community.
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Appendix A - IRB Approval Form

To: Dr. Katherine Wix; Ms. Anancia Stafford
From: Institutional Review Board – Governors State University–
   Dale Schuit, PT, PhD, MS, Board Member
CC: irb@govst.edu
Date: August 28, 2018
Re: Racial Identity, Resilience, and College Completion for Black Males

Project Number: #18-07-01

We are pleased to inform you that your proposal has been approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board. Please be advised that the protocol will expire on August 28, 2019, one year after the date of approval.

At the end of the year, if your research is completed, please inform the IRB in writing of the closing date by using the IRB Annual Review form, which can be found at www.govst.edu/irb. If you intend to collect data using human subjects after that date, the proposal must be renewed by the IRB. If you make any substantive changes in your research protocol before that date, you must inform the IRB and have the new protocol approved.

Please include the exact title of your project and the assigned IRB number in any correspondence about this project.

Best wishes for success with your research.
Appendix C- Consent Form

CONSENT FORM:

Background and Purpose of this Project: This consent form is a request and agreement for your participation in a doctoral research study completed by Anancia Stafford, doctoral candidate at Governor State University. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Katherine Wix, Ph.D. You are being asked to be in a research study to examine resilience and racial identity for Black male college students who have either graduated or did not persist to graduation.

To participate, you must identify yourself as a Black male, and must have attended or currently be attending a 4-year university. You may have graduated or may not have not graduated; the age of graduation or discontinuation must be between the ages of 18-25. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Ultimately, this research will be included in my dissertation and published for academic purposes.

Explanation of Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to fill out the 10 item Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10), and the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS, also referred to as the Cross Social Attitude Scale) on Survey Monkey. Additionally, all participants who complete the scales are eligible to join the raffle. At the end of both surveys, an email address will be provided so that you may contact me regarding your interest in entering the 100 Amazon gift card raffle. You only must inquiere once about the raffle and you will be entered. Raffle participation is completely optional. By acknowledging that you have read this consent form, you give the researcher permission to contact you through the email address you provide regarding the raffle results. The researcher cannot trace your scale responses to your email address as your email will be separate from the scales. The scales will take about 20-35 minutes total to complete.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study: A possible benefit of this study is the increase in the participants’ personal insight and awareness of their strengths and areas in which they may need improvement regarding resilience and racial identity. There are minimal risks involved in this study. The process of exploring racial identity development and resilience may produce various emotional responses. If there are strong reactions to participating in this study, counseling referrals to openpathcollective.org is provided to assist with processing your experience and information regarding the scales. Openpathcollective.org is a website that allows people to browse therapist who provide affordable services to people around the county, participants would be able to choose a therapist of their own preference for in person, video or over the phone therapy. This link will also be provided on the "Thank you" page of the scales on Survey Monkey. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants are free to refuse participation, withdraw from the study at any time, or skip any questions.

Confidentiality: The researchers will not be collecting any information about your identity unless you choose to provide your email for the raffle. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using password protected files. The researchers will not include any identifying information in any reports that may be published in the future. Records will be erased permanently once the dissertation is completed.
Appendix C - Continued

Refusal/Withdrawal: The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or your university if you are still enrolled. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process. Additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material. It is important to note that if you chose to withdraw or do not complete the assessments entirely, you will not be eligible to participate in the raffle.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns: You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, please contact investigators Dr. Katherine Wix at ___________________________ and Anancia Stafford at ___________________________. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact Governors State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, Dr. Renée Theiss, by phone at ___________________________ or by email at ___________________________. If any problems or concerns occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to the number above. Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which can be found on the IRB website at http://www.govst.edu/IRB/

Use of Research Data: The results of the study will be used for the defense of the proposed dissertation, future publications, and future professional conference presentations.

Consent to Participate: By indicating a “Yes” in the next prompt, you indicate that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.
This research study seeks to examine racial identity and resilience for Black men who have graduated with a bachelors degree and those who did not complete their bachelors degree. Must have graduated or discontinued college between the ages of 18-25. To participate, visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8RKM8G5

***$100 amazon gift card raffle drawing for participants***