Summer 2019

An Anti-Deficit Approach to the Study of Persistence: Factors Influencing Persistence Among Black Males Attending Community College

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An anti-deficit Approach to the Study of Persistence:

Factors influencing Persistence among Black Males attending Community College

Donna K. Williams

Governors State University
Dedication

This capstone is dedicated to my four nephews, William, Wesley, Warren, and Winston and most importantly to my son, Lennix.

To all the amazing, energetic, outstanding little boys out there who grow up misunderstood; I want you to see greatness in yourself—it is time we control the narrative, chart our own path, and celebrate your success.
Acknowledgments

There are several people I would like to acknowledge for without their support and guidance none this would not have been possible. First, I would like to acknowledge the chair of my committee, Dr. Marlon Cummings whose guidance, unwavering support, and several encouragement sessions helped me get through the rough patches I encountered. I can truly say our conversations gave me the jolt of confidence I needed to keep pursuing my goal of completion. To the rest of my committee, Dr. Quincy Martin and Dr. Matthew Cooney, your encouragement, guidance, and unique perspective were instrumental in assisting me to complete this journey. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Steve Damarjian, who stepped into this research at the latter end of the process, but whose support and guidance made all the difference in successfully completing. I will never forget the many conversations we had about how this research can positively impact the lives of Black males pursuing a degree. I would also like to acknowledge the participants of my study who willingly shared their personal experiences and gave voice to this research.

I would like to send a nod of gratitude to my classmate and friend Michelle Adams, we kept each other accountable and that made all the difference in maintaining the focus needed to stay on track. I would also like to acknowledge a group of positive, impactful women who are not only my good group of girlfriends but were mentors during this process. I have to give a special thanks to Tasha Williams who read countless versions of my research.

Last but not least, I want to give a special thanks to my village, my aunts Lucille, Lerma-Jean, and Palestine, my cousins Junnell and Sheila, my twin brother William and my sister-in-law Dina and most importantly my mom and dad, Dianne and Akinwale Noibi. You were always a phone call away and made sacrifices to support me in my efforts to balance raising my
son and pursing my educational goal. To mom and dad, I am forever grateful for the support and love you have shown me; in many ways it is that same love and support that has given me the drive and perseverance that has fueled me thus far, thank you.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The vast majority of literature on postsecondary Black males emphasizes the lack of academic success for this segment. Research reports that Black males have lower levels of academic achievement, ranking at or near the bottom of most success indicators, which include enrollment, persistence, engagement, and attainment (Harris & Wood, 2013). However, in examining the discourse on postsecondary Black males, a great deal of research is deficit-based. Much of the body of literature on Black males asks deficit-based questions such as, “Why do so few postsecondary Black males persist to graduation?” Framing research questions from this perspective has a singular focus on the academic failures of this group and ultimately produces literature that exploits and emphasizes underachievement.

Providing a counter-narrative to the plethora of deficit-based literature on postsecondary Black males, this study is guided by an anti-deficit approach that seeks to highlight factors that influence persistence among Black men attending community college. This mixed method study will pursue a detailed account of the personal and institutional experiences that encourage first-time, full-time, Black male students to persist toward successful completion of an associate degree or certificate within the guidelines set by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Specifically, this research seeks to understand how this segment perceives their academic, social, and intrapersonal experiences have helped them to persist toward graduation from a community college. Conducting research from this standpoint addresses a gap in scholarly literature, where the few studies that do examine community college Black male persistence do so from a deficit perspective. Choosing an anti-deficit approach also provides an
examination of what this population has done to persist, despite the documented barriers they face.

**Background of the Study**

The study of undergraduate student persistence is a well-documented topic in the field of education (Tinto, 1975, 1982, 1987, 1993; Astin, 1975, 1985; Bean, 1980, 1990; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Hagedorn, 2005; Cuyjet, 1997; Wood & Palmer, 2015). While the majority of research in this area has been focused on baccalaureate institutions (Halpin, 1990; Stuart, Rios-Aguilar, & Deil-Amen, 2014); community colleges have received considerably less attention—despite the fact that community college serves as the primary entry point for undergraduates in the United States (Everett, 2015). As with four-year institutions, community colleges struggle to retain their students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only twenty-four percent of the students seeking an associate degree or certificate from a public community college will complete in a three-year period (nces.ed.gov, 2018). Addressing the prevalence of student attrition within community college requires a comprehensive agenda focused on the factors that impede student success. One way to accomplish this goal is by conducting research that places greater focus on those deemed most vulnerable—one such population is Black males.

The lack of persistence—semester-by-semester enrollment—among Black males attending community college has reached epidemic proportions and the implications of this phenomenon has begun to have far reaching consequences for Black males, the Black community, and society at large. Levin, Belfield, Muennig, and Rouse (2007) express the need to increase educational success among Black males as not only a moral issue, but of considerable importance to society. This student segment is particularly vulnerable and deserves scholarly
consideration for several reasons. First, Black men have historically been underrepresented and underserved in the U.S. postsecondary education system (Harris & Wood, 2013). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), as of 2014, the percentage of Black male undergraduates has only risen three percentage points since 1976, when Blacks males accounted for nine percent of all male undergraduates attending college and universities (Harper 2006; Harris & Wood, 2013; Wood & Palmer, 2015). Although there has been an increase in the number of minorities pursuing two-and four-year degrees (Kim, 2011); current data reveals that undergraduate Black males have the lowest graduation rates among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups (Harper & Harris, 2012; Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2010)—giving Black males attending community college the lowest three-year graduation rate among all their racial/ethnic male peers (Wood, 2014).

Secondly, the lion's share of literature on the persistence of Black males has a significant focus on four-year institutions. Meanwhile, Black males overwhelmingly select community college as their pathway to postsecondary education with 54.9 percent of all undergraduate Black males choosing to enter community college (Urias & Wood, 2014). According to Luke & Harris (2013), the lack of scholarship specific to this segment leaves many unanswered questions about Black males attending community college.

There are a number of studies (Brooks, Jones, & Burt, 2012; Davis, Coward, & Jackson, 2013) that speak to Black male persistence at four-year institutions and very few that specifically focus on Black males in community college (Strayhorn, 2012; Wood & Williams, 2013). Based upon research, Black men attending community college have extremely different academic and social experiences that influence their persistence habits (Flowers, 2006; Wood & Palmer, 2015). Understanding these in-group differences hold significant insight into understanding the
persistence habits of Black males attending community college. For this reason, it is important to produce research findings specific to this segment, as persistence is a multi-layered phenomenon and varies across this segment.

Fourth, the disparity in the number of Black men pursuing higher education in comparison to Black women is concerning. Black females are entering and completing college at greater rates than Black males (Lee & Ransom, 2011)—giving black students the widest gender gap with Black male students earning just 31.7 percent of the associate degrees awarded compared to 68.3 percent for Black females (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, Ginder, 2011). Without intervention, Black men will continue to lose the opportunity for gainful employment, which has devastating implications for Black men and the Black community. Black men stand to lose their self-confidence and their ability to financially provide for their families; in turn making them less attractive partners for marriage. Additionally, it is widely accepted that educational attainment equates to higher earning potential and the lack of Black male postsecondary completers has a direct impact on their potential for lifetime earnings. According to the Center on Education and the Workforce, by the year 2020, there will be 55 million job openings and 65 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). The fact that Black males attending community college have been graduating at drastically lower rates than that of White men and other men of color, means they will consistently loose the opportunity for upward mobility that degree attainment provides.

Community College and Black Male Persistence

Community colleges and the programs they offer are a valuable asset to society; however, these institutions are failing to adequately meet the needs of its patrons, especially Black males. In the higher education system, community colleges are known for being conveniently located,
cost effective, and accessible to all. It is also true that community colleges have been instrumental in expanding access to higher education, however, student persistence, particularly among Black males attending these institutions, has been a long-standing issue. In order to stay true to its mission of open access to all, community college scholars and industry professionals must begin to address the pertinent issue of persistence by creating and implementing policies aimed directly at addressing the populations they serve. Ester & Mosby (2007), report that the retention gap between Black males and other student groups will not change without strong leadership and meaningful engagement between students, faculty, and staff. This is another reason why research specific to Black males attending community college is a necessity as this sub-segment has challenges unique to the segment of postsecondary Black males.

More than those that enter four-year institutions, Black males attending community college tend to be first-generation—students whose parents have never attended a postsecondary institution (Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012). First-generation students enter college lacking the familial guidance and educational support needed to successfully complete a degree. Empirical research reveals that students of college-educated parents have a significant advantage to those whose parents lack the cultural capital that college-educated parents possess (Everett, 2015). They also tend to be non-traditional students that have the responsibility of managing family, employment, and other responsibilities in addition to school. Lastly, community colleges tend to attract students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which means that a large fraction of students enter the learning environment needing remedial courses in preparation for the rigor of college-level work. Among students enrolled in community college between 2003 and 2009, 68 percent report taking a least one remedial class with almost half of the incoming students taking two or more remedial courses and 26 percent taking remedial courses in different
subjects (Chen, 2016). While these unique circumstances create challenges that community
colleges struggle to address, the prevalence of these circumstances among Black males attending
community college necessitate scholarly inquiry that has a sole concentration on this sub-
segment with the hope of positively influencing the persistence habits of Black males who
overwhelmingly choose community college as their path to postsecondary education.

Deficit-based Outcomes and Community College Black Males

While the abovementioned reflects a need for a focused examination specific to Black
males attending community college, scholarship on this segment tends to emphasize the
academic disengagement and underachievement of Black males. Most studies highlight the fact
that regardless of the institution type, Black males are attaining degrees at drastically lower rates
than other groups. The body of literature is replete with an over concentration of reasons why
Black males fail to persist. Reasons such as, a lack of academic preparedness, internal conflict,
lack of engagement, issues of identity, lack of institutional support as well as other
socioeconomic factors (Strayhorn, 2012; Wood & Ireland, 2013). This deficit-based approach,
which is constantly reinforced in the media, academic research journals, and education policy
(Harper, 2012) has significant consequences on how Black males see themselves in relation to
their ability to successfully navigate college. Adding to the body of literature on the persistence
of Black males attending community college, this study will approach the topic of persistence
among Black males from an anti-deficit perspective. Therefore, little attention will be given to
the extent to which Black males in community college are disengaged and underachieving.
However, in order to provide appropriate context to the anti-deficit argument, a summation of
frequently publicized deficit-based outcomes is necessary.
Deficit-based outcomes reveal that in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups, Black males attending community college are disproportionately underachieving in academic outcomes: percentage of degrees earned, persistence, and average cumulative grade point average (Bush & Bush, 2010; Wood & Ireland, 2014). Research confirms that far too many Black male students enter college unprepared for the rigor of college-level work; requiring the use of remedial classes to fill academic gaps (Gardenhire-Crooks, Collado, Martin, Castro, 2010).

Wood and Palmer (2015) report that Black males attending community college are more prone to early departure. According to Wood & Williams (2013) “11.5 percent of Black male students will depart from a community college within one year of admission, 48.9 percent leave after three years, and 83 percent leave after six years, without achieving their intended certificate or degree” (p. 2). Also, compared to males from other racial and ethnic groups, Black males have the lowest completion rates, with only 16 percent graduating over a three-year time span (Wood & Palmer, 2015). While Black males are more likely to be in need of faculty-student interaction; in community college, they experience lower levels of engagement due to institutional conditions, racism and identity conflicts (Bush & Bush, 2010; Harper, 2009; Wood & Ireland, 2013). Overall, deficit-based outcomes reveal that, Black male students lack the cultural capital necessary to navigate the academic and social terrain needed to be successful (Gardenhire-Crooks et., al.).

While this vein of study helps to understand the challenges, postsecondary Black males face, it ignores the achievements experienced by this segment. In order to move beyond the prevalence of research that consistently induces the “why nots” of this segment, anti-deficit research can assist in providing a balanced perspective of Black males attending community
college. For this reason, Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement model is used as a process framework for this research. A process framework—used to provide direction on how to engage in any given activity (Wood & Palmer, 2015)—will allow this research to be explored from an anti-deficit perspective by formulating research questions that seek to extrapolate what this segment is doing to successfully navigate toward completion. Through the use of Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework, this study seeks to add to the body literature on community college Black males by identifying the academic achievements experienced, in spite of the well-publicized low rates of persistence and underachievement.

Developed by Shaun Harper (2010)—to better understand the factors that enable Black male academic success—the anti-deficit achievement framework was created as an inquiry-based framework that structures research questions to focus on the success of this student population instead of the prevailing method, which is to formulate research questions that induce information emphasizing the disadvantages, disengagement, and academic underperformance of postsecondary Black males. Research questions structured using Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework have a deliberate focus on academic success and the positive attributes of participants. Additionally, research questions are designed to induce information on three points along the educational pipeline: pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college persistence. The pipeline points identified in this framework help to highlight factors or experiences that may have influenced their ability to persist to and through their education journey to graduate from a community college.
Statement of the Problem

The problem this study seeks to examine is the long-standing issue of persistence among Black males attending community college. An examination of persistence for this student population is a necessity, as community college is the primary entry point for the majority of Black men who pursue postsecondary education (Harris & Wood, 2016). The literature, though limited, on Black males attending community college consistently emphasizes the lack of achievement for this segment. In general, prior research on Black males focuses on the traditional social, academic, and environmental variables that impact persistence, however the underpinning of research on Black males has been predominately deficit-based (Harper, 2012; Wood & Palmer, 2015). For this reason, this research will examine persistence for Black males attending community college from an anti-deficit perspective. Utilizing an anti-deficit approach will allow the researcher to examine persistence habits this segment identifies as attributes that influence their ability to persist to graduation.

Research Question Guiding the Study

The purpose of this mixed method study is to explore the phenomenon of persistence from an anti-deficit perspective by examining first-time, full-time Black male students who are graduating from a community college. Looking at a seven-campus community college district located in an urban Midwestern metropolis, anti-deficit research was conducted on Black males who entered community college in the Fall semester of 2016 and have either completed a credential or are on track to graduate in the Spring or Summer semester of 2019. Using a mixed method approach, this study explored in great depth how students perceive their journey to graduation was impacted by their personal and institutional experiences. Specifically, the anti-deficit achievement framework considers participant experiences along three education pipeline
PERSISTENCE

points: pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success.

This study was guided by the following research question and sub questions:

1. How do personal and/or institutional experiences impact the persistence of first-time, full-time Black male students attending community college?
   a. What precollege experiences contributed to this segment’s ability to start and persist through community college?
   b. Once enrolled, what personal and/or institutional perceptions does this segment attribute to their ability to persist to graduation?
   c. What are the post-college plans for this segment and were these plans instrumental in helping them to persist?

**Significance of the Study**

Conducting anti-deficit research on the persistence of community college Black males has theoretical and practical significance to the field of higher education as this vein of research extends the literature on theories regarding factors that influence the choice to persist for this student segment. Selecting Black males who are first-time, full-time attendees to community college is significant since students that fit these criteria are considered to have persisted if they complete a degree or certificate within three years. These students are referred to as IPED students and the U.S. Department of Education uses data gathered through IPEDS as the primary source of persistence and retention information. Using IPED students is ideal as data gathered from this study relates directly to the parameters by which institutions of higher learning are financially assessed.

Through anti-deficit research, it is presumed that the findings from this study will help to identify areas of strength that can be duplicated and emulated to encourage and assist larger
numbers of Black males to realize the goal of graduation. It also demonstrates that in-spite of the public discourse regarding the disengagement and underachievement of Black males at every level of the K-16 education pipeline, community college Black males demonstrate an ability to overcome negative societal factors that might impede academic success. For community college professionals, faculty, administrators, and student success advocates, the study of undergraduate student persistence in general, and for Black males attending community in particular, is of significant importance to the vitality of the United States postsecondary education system.

Definition of Terms

The following list of terms are presented as operational definitions guiding this study. As it relates to the terms “persistence” and “retention”, they are often used interchangeably (Hagedorn, 2005) and for the purpose of this study, the term persistence is most frequently used since this study seeks to understand how pre-college and in-college personal and institutional experiences impact semester-to-semester persistence of graduating Black males attending community college.

Persistence – For the purpose of this study persistence is defined as an individual’s choice to remain enrolled semester to semester while pursuing an associate degree or certificate. According to the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS), for community colleges, students are considered to have persisted if they were enrolled at any institution or had attained a degree or certificate 3 years after first enrolling (nces.ed.gov).

Academic Success – For the purpose of this study, academic success is defined as the ability of a Black male attending community college to persist to graduation.

Black males – Refers to those of African ancestry who identify ethnically and culturally on the African diaspora.
Retention – A measure of the rate at which a student persists through their first year of college and re-enrolls for the next academic school year at the same college.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) – A system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid program.

Data gathered through IPEDS is the primary source of persistence and retention information for the education system of this nation. For the purpose of this study, persistence is defined by IPEDS, to be the completion of a degree or certificate that is earned within 150% of the normal time to complete a degree, which for community college is three years (nces.ed.gov).

**Organization of Study**

Chapter 1 presents an introduction, gives a background of the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, presents the research question guiding the study, the significance of the study, and provides operational definitions. Chapter 2 provides a review of the theoretical framework guiding the study and relevant literature, which include, an overview of persistence theories and research regarding the influences that impact the persistence of Black males attending community college. A robust explanation of the methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study is presented in Chapter 3. The results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis and findings are contained in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively. Chapter 6 contains a discussion of conclusions drawn from the findings, and the researcher’s recommendations regarding the education of Black males in K-12 and postsecondary settings.
CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework

Guided by an anti-deficit framework, the goal of this mixed method study is to highlight factors that influence persistence among Black men attending community college. While there has been a significant increase in the number of studies on the persistence of postsecondary Black males, the majority of research has been focused on those attending four-year institutions. In the late 1990’s student success professionals began to consider academic experiences specific to Black males attending community college. However, regardless of the institution type, research on Black male persistence is predominately deficit-based (Harper, 2012; Wood & Palmer, 2015). In response to data detailing the social and precollege systemic hardships that contribute to the lack of academic success for collegiate Black men, scholars report that a focused agenda is needed to assist Black men in entering and completing college (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, 2010, 2012; Palmer, Wood, Dancy, Staryhorn, 2014; Wood & Palmer, 2015). For this reason, selecting an appropriate theoretical framework, especially for Black males attending community college is important, as this segment has generally been inadequately and under-theorized (Wood & Palmer, 2015).

In order to answer the research question of this study, Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement model is used as the process framework and Ladsons-Billings & Tate’s (1995) critical race theory (CRT) of education is used as the conceptual theoretical framework. As a process framework, Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement model is used to better understand how Black male students perceive the factors and influences that helped them successfully complete a community college degree or certificate. As the conceptual lens, Landson-Billings & Tate’s (1995) CRT of Education allows the researcher to contextualize
persistence among this segment, using the tenets of CRT as a backdrop to frame the impact of race and inequity in postsecondary education. Pairing these frameworks, allows the researcher to adequately examine Black male students in community college from an anti-deficit perspective.

The Orientation of Deficit-based Research

Deficit-based research—research that amplifies disengagement and failures—is rooted in deficit thinking, which is a social construct that attributes the failures of marginalized groups to culture and value deficiencies. Valencia (2010), coined the term deficit thinking and explains it as the on-going class and racial construct that blames underrepresented groups for their lack of academic success. This deficit-based approach is the predominant methodology used to study the persistence of Black males in general and more specifically in community college. However, deficit thinking fails to acknowledge institutional and systemic inadequacies as contributing factors to academically unsuccessful students (Manthei, 2016). Instead, deficit thinking frameworks blame academic failures on family structure, linguistic background, and a lack of cultural competencies (Valencia, 2010). In direct opposition to deficit thinking, this study employs Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework to highlight the achievements of this segment.

Anti-deficit Achievement Framework

In direct opposition to deficit thinking paradigms, Harper (2010, 2012), developed an anti-deficit achievement framework to learn about Black males and students of color who managed to successfully navigate their way through the STEM postsecondary pipeline. Through the creation of Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit framework, he demonstrated a need to consider successful Black male students “to counterbalance the popular one-sided emphasis on failure and
low-performing Black male undergraduates…with insights gathered from those who somehow manage to navigate their way to and through higher education” (Harper, 2012, p. 2).

The anti-deficit achievement framework structures research questions to focus on academic success and considers three points along the education pipeline; pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success (see Figure 1). Pre-college socialization and readiness refers to factors that influence students to enter higher education. These influences include family, grammar school and high school experiences, and other preparatory experiences for college. College achievement refers to the various higher education (in-class, out of class, and campus) experiences that influence students to persist to graduation. Post-college success is measured by a student’s entrance into post-graduate studies. Since the focus of this study is on community college graduation, post-college persistence, for the purpose of this study, is marked by entry into a baccalaureate program or entrance into the workforce.

In addition to the three points along the education pipeline, the anti-deficit achievement framework outlines researchable dimensions of success as subcategories of each point. Under pre-college socialization and readiness, the researchable dimensions are familial factors, K-12 school forces, and out-of-school college prep experiences. In terms of college achievement, the researchable dimensions include classroom experiences, out-of-class engagement, and enriching educational experiences. The last education point, post-college persistence, will deviate from Harper’s framework; he considered post-college persistence as entry into a STEM workplace or matriculation to graduate school. Since participants of this study will be graduating with an associate degree or certificate, post-college persistence is based on either matriculation to a four-year institution or entry into the workforce.
Figure 1: Shaun Harper’s Anti-deficit Achievement Framework

As will be surmised in the following pages, pairing Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework with Landsons-Billings & Tate’s, (1995) Critical Race Theory of Education provides an adequate theoretical paradigm to study the influences that impact the persistence of Black males attending community college. This will be accomplished by utilizing the counter-narrative aspect of CRT of education, which gives Black males the opportunity to voice their lived experiences and recognizes them as experts on their experiences that have contributed to their ability to persist.
Critical Race Theory (CRT) of Education used from an Anti-deficit Perspective

Critical Race Theory of Education evolved from the earlier theoretical work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman who in the mid-1970’s created an analytical framework to address societal and racial inequities in the American judicial system (Delgado, 1995; Taylor, 1998; Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009). This theory postulates that racism is not only normal but woven into the fabric of American society (Hiraldo, 2010; Landson-Billing, 2015). The study of Critical Race Theory examines the societal preoccupation with race, racism, and its role in exacerbating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups. To this end, the purpose of Critical Race Theory is to expose the vast divide in privilege and power that exists in the racial make-up of the United States (Hiraldo, 2010).

As a social concept in the United States, the prevailing view of race is constructed on the idea that the dominant group creates and maintains societal norms that intentionally and systemically situate this group into positions of privilege and power over all other social groups (Myers, 2012). Omi & Winant (1986, 1994, 2015) refer to this evolutionary process as racial formation, which is a socio-historical process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories. The most prominent example of this process is the historical subjugation of African Americans living in the United States who endured hundreds of years of slavery and segregation—meant to legally relegate African American’s to second-class citizenship. Blacks lived under societal law that refused to extend political, economic or basic human rights, that were legally sanctioned for the dominant culture.

While this racial construct did not occur overnight—slavery originated as indentured servitude, not predicated by race however, over time slavery and the second-class citizenship associated with it, would exclusively be cast upon people of African descent who were referred
to as Negro or Black. The U.S. system of slavery and the societal norms needed to secure this system of servitude, created a racially based society, which resulted in the creation of a specific racial identity with customs that supported a system of White supremacy and marginalization for Blacks (Omi & Winant, 1994). Critical Race Theory was created to understand and challenge the dominant view of race and the role it plays for different segments of society (Gillborn & Landson-Billings, 2009).

With the creation of Critical Race Theory, for the first time, scholars were able to theorize race and explore its impact on society and marginalized populations. Used as a theoretical lens for higher education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) postulate that the scholarship developed by the theoretical use of Critical Race Theory is compatible to the challenges of inequity and inclusivity faced by institutions of higher education, particularly community college.

Critical Race Theory consists of five major tents that illustrate the permanence of race and racism in U.S. society (see Table 1). The five tenets include: (a) The permanence and intersectionality of race and racism (b) The critique of liberalism and color blindness (c) counter-storytelling (d) interest convergence (e) Whiteness as property. Approaching research based on the tenets of CRT represent a theoretical base that can be used to highlight disparities that exist for marginalized racial groups, specifically Black males in higher education who have historically been inappropriately theorized (Wood & Palmer, 2015; Harper, 2010, 2012)—resulting in a plethora of ineffective scholarship that does not address the needs of this student group.
Table 1

Critical Race Theory (Haskin & Singh, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Permanence and Intersectionality of Race and Racism</th>
<th>Racism is deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and psychologically and intersects with sex, class, national origin and sexual orientation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Critique of Liberalism and Color Blindness</td>
<td>Challenges assertions of colorblindness and the opportunities of privilege granted to the dominate class that are not grated to marginalized populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-Storytelling</td>
<td>Allows individuals the opportunity to voice their experiences. Counter-storytelling gives marginalized populations the ability to give their own account of their lived experience; which encourages research to be presented from a place of empowerment instead of research that is painted by the dominate culture’s point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Convergence</td>
<td>Centers on the fact that Whites have been the primary benefactors of the civil rights legislation. Critical race theorist believe that civil rights legislation only provided basic rights for people of color and that these advances often came with significant losses. An example of this can be seen in the desegregation of U.S. schools. Many Black teachers and administrators lost their jobs or were displaced as a result of schools in Black neighborhoods closing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteness as property</td>
<td>Indicates that social, educational, and economic progress and values are an asset only afforded to Whites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Race Theory of Education examines the ingrained inequities that exist in all faucets of education. Critical Race Theory of Education is based on three central propositions:

(a) Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States (b) U.S. society is based on property rights (c) The intersection of race and property creates the inequality seen in our education system.
Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States. In the vein of Bell and Freeman’s legal theory of Critical Race, Landson-Billings & Tate’s theory asserts that inequity in educational settings is in large part due to the societal power structure of race and the disparities that these racial structures create for marginalized groups—statistical data supports this notion (Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

At every stage in the K-16 education pipeline, students of color, especially Black males experience the harsh realities of living in a racialized society. In high school, minority students, particularly Black males, face harsher discipline and are more likely than their peers to be suspended or expelled. They are taught by lower-paid and less experienced teachers and this group lacks access to rigorous high school curricula in which to prepare for entry into postsecondary educational environments (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

While many scholars have yet to embrace CRT as evidence to the inequities experienced by marginalized groups, education data speaks to the divide in access and opportunity based on race. According to the Center for Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, there are significant differences in educational outcomes among equally qualified Whites and minorities. Data reveals that regardless of ACT/SAT scores, Whites have higher postsecondary graduation rates than equally qualified African Americans; and when considering class, these outcomes remain the same; low-income Whites are more likely to receive a bachelor’s degree than low-income Blacks; 23 percent to 12 percent respectively (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). This data demonstrates the need to analyze and view postsecondary research on Black males from a critical race perspective. Throughout each sector of the K-16 education pipeline, Blacks are relegated to institutions that are overcrowded, underfunded, harshly disciplined, and
lack the resources to adequately prepare minority students to equally pursue and attain postsecondary degrees at the same level as their White counterparts.

U.S. society is based on property rights. This second proposition states that from its inception, the United State has always valued property rights over human rights and that this inherent belief system has a tremendously negative impact on marginalized groups. Critical race theorists believe that society’s power structure is predicated on an ability to define and possess property and as a result, this power structure creates conflict around who can possess and benefit from access to that power.

According to Landson-Billings & Tate (1995), in the education system, this concept is represented by those who hold and have access to intellectual property, which is the tangible and intangible resources such as, state-of-the-art technologies, science labs, quality and quantity of curriculum, and community support, that gives its recipients the opportunity to prosper and grow intellectually. While schools that serve low-income students—usually minorities who lack the same level of access to such resources—are significantly underprepared to meet the mandated K-12 standards, which impedes student success in postsecondary settings. According to Carnevale et al., (2013), this large divide in race and ethnicity has become the “capstone for K-12 inequality…and the postsecondary system mimics and magnifies the racial and ethnic inequality in educational preparation it inherits from the K-12 system” (p. 7). This polarization of resources continues in higher education and is one of the root causes for the lack of retention and persistence that plague Black men attending community college.

The intersection of race and property creates the inequality seen in our education system. The third and last proposition asserts that society’s propensity to value the notion of property rights over human rights, has continued to make race a significant factor in society, which has set
the stage for the current state of our education system. From a critical race perspective, understanding education inequality is based in the following three principles:

1). Racism is widespread and Deeply Ingrained in American life—critical race theorist argue that education disparities between Whites and minorities are not isolated incidents, but are a result of institutional and systemic racism present in every facet of society, including the K-16 education system.

2). Ineffective Civil Rights Law—critical race theorists posit that the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, meant to provide equality and civil rights to Blacks was in fact used to further segregate and marginalize. In terms of education, critical race theorist point to the case of Brown v. Board of Education, which mandated the integration of schools in America. Civil rights leaders of that time fought for Blacks to receive equal exposure to the education and societal resources afforded to Whites. However, fifty years later, this strategy has not achieved its intended goal. As result of school desegregation, the Black community has seen little if any equality. Instead of providing more resources and opportunity, desegregation caused many Black teachers and administrators to lose their position and increased the phenomenon of White flight, which continues, to this day; further perpetuating segregation in education. For example, Blacks and other minorities remain the majority in the twenty-one of the twenty-two largest urban school districts in America (Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

3). Challenging Claims of Neutrality, Objectivity, Color-blindness and Meritocracy—many claim that we live in a society where race is of no consequence, they report that the wounds of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation have been eradicated as result of civil rights legislation. Critical Race theorists believe this assertion to be erroneous. Today, some are attempting to dismantle civil rights legislation, deeming it unnecessary in a color-blind society.
In higher education, currently there is a vigorous debate around the necessity of affirmative action and its use of creating an even playing field for minorities and people of color to gain access to college, especially within highly selective schools. Critical race theorists believe that the existence of these principles create and perpetuate the inequality present in the U.S. education system.

Combating claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and the other aforementioned principles; CRT theorist rely on counter-storytelling, referred to as “naming one’s own reality” (Landsons-Billing & Tate, 1995, p. 56), to give marginalized groups a voice in which to construct their lived experiences. In research, the use of counter-storytelling is especially important in the process of examining marginalized groups as it gives “voice” to their realities in a way that other forms of research cannot. In order to answer the research question of this study, this researcher will rely heavily on the counter-storytelling aspect of CRT of education. The principle of naming one’s own reality will give participants the opportunity to speak power to the experiences that helped them to persist to graduation. Also, the use of this principle strengthens Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework, since naming one’s own experience gives “voice”, credence, and validity to their successful pursuit of education in the face of well-documented barriers. The above-mentioned principles illustrate the inequities present in the U.S. education system, its impact on marginalized groups, and the importance of giving these groups a voice to construct and deconstruct the societal narrative regarding their experiences. For this reason, the selection of conducting research on Black males attending community college from an anti-deficit perspective in the student’s “voice” was chosen.

Based on the discourse presented, pairing CRT’s (Bell, 1993; Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Gillborn & Landson-Billings, 2009; Delgado, 1995) principle of naming one’s own
experience with Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework—which frames research questions to extrapolate success—is the ideal theoretical lens to examine how Black males perceive their personal and institutional experiences have been instrumental to their ability to persistence toward graduation.

**Review of Relevant Literature**

Historically, the study of persistence has been explored by examining the social, academic, cognitive, financial, and institutional barriers that impact student retention. Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the persistence of postsecondary students, albeit much of this research has been conducted by studying traditional students. While other studies have specifically examined the retention habits of minority students, the theoretical framework for most of this research has been based on Tinto’s (1975) interactionalist theory of departure or theories that build on Tinto’s work (Bean 1980, 1990; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1978, 1980, 1995). This current study uses a different lens through which to view persistence in higher education, specifically for Black males attending community college. As a review of the relevant literature pertaining to persistence, it is important to highlight the fact that early theorist, did not consider the unique circumstance Black males face. Circumstances such as, being first-generation students who mostly hail from disadvantaged economic and social backgrounds that do not adequately prepare individuals for the academic and social etiquette needed to succeed in college. The following section provides a historical view of retention models and how they evolved.

**Historical Look at Persistence Models**

For decades, scholars in the United States have empirically studied the persistence habits of postsecondary students with the goal of drastically reducing the occurrence of student
departure, which as of 2010, is approximately 30% of all first-year students who enter college (Schneider, 2010; O’Keefe, 2013). While this study seeks to explore Black male student persistence within community colleges, note that research regarding this phenomenon is relatively new. Early theorist created student retention models with a focus on four-year institutions (Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993; Astin, 1975, 1985; Bean, 1980, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Lorang & Pascarella, 1981), which have historically been void of racial diversity.

The earliest studies of undergraduate student retention date back to the 1930s and initially focused on what was commonly referred to as student mortality (Berger Ramierz, & Lyon 2012; Demetiou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011)—a student’s inability to complete. Findings from these earlier studies would be the precursor for future student retention studies; as a result of increased postsecondary enrollment that would occur in the 1950s and 1960s as more Americans sought the promise of success that the pursuit of higher education would offer.

After the passing of the veteran’s GI Bill and The Higher Education Act—which provided financial assistance to middle and low-income students—by 1969, 35 percent of all 18 to 24-year-old, and increasing numbers of adult students were in enrolled in college (Snyder, 1993). It was at this time, that institutions of higher education began to conduct and implement research to understand and support retention efforts, as it had become a familiar concern on college and university campuses (Demetriou & Schmitz & Sciborski, 2011).

Panos and Astin (1968) conducted large-scale studies that helped cultivate the study of undergraduate retention in higher education (as cited in Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011). Astin (1975, 1985) theorized that there were many predictive factors associated with student retention; he conducted a longitudinal study, which concluded that there are two primary
predictive factors of student success: personal and environmental. Astin’s work resulted in a student involvement model, which postulates that the more physical and intellectual involvement a student exerts on their college life, the more likely they are to persist (Berger et al., 2012).

Although, it was not until the publication of Vincent Tinto’s (1975) article, “Dropout from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research” that the focus of student departure shifted to consider a student’s academic and social integration—or lack thereof—as mitigating factors to the probability of a student being retained. A pioneering figure in the study of undergraduate retention, Tinto (1975, 1993), changed the debate surrounding retention with the creation of his Interactionalist model of student retention, which posits that successful persistence is dependent on a student’s ability to academically and socially integrate into the university sphere (Berger et al., 2012). According to Tinto, a precursor to academic and social integration is first dependent on a student’s individual characteristics (such as family background and pre-college preparedness), their initial commitment to the institution, and the goal of graduation (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004).

Tinto viewed the college setting as a societal system and theorized that students who decided to depart from the university feel a sense of incongruence, which he defined as the totality of interactions between the individual and members of the institution. He argued these incongruent experiences reflected a negative evaluation of the social and intellectual experiences that ultimately led students to depart from the university (Tinto, 1987).

Numerous studies (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Terenzini, Lorang & Pascarella, 1981), established the validity of Tinto’s model on students attending four-year residential institutions. Pascarella & Chapman (1983), compared student departure at four-year residential institutions and four-and two-year commuter institutions—colleges without resident halls. Tinto’s model
received germane results for all three types of institutions. The study found that successful academic integration was paramount to student retention at commuter institutions, although social integration was less of a determining factor and in some cases had a negative impact (Halpin, 1990; Braxton et al., 2004; Napoli & Wortman, 1998). This research further established the validity of Tinto’s (1975, 1987) model and its predictive value on college student retention. It also exposed the need to expand student departure theories to consider the experiences of students attending commuter institutions.

Bean & Metzner (1985) argued that the body of literature on student retention including Tinto’s (1975) model heavily relied on social integration as a determinate of student retention; excluding the experiences of nontraditional students (Morrison & Silverman, 2012). According to these scholars, they defined nontraditional students to be either, older than twenty-four, commuter, or enrolled part-time. They hypothesized that the decision to depart for these students was largely dependent on environmental factors, which include finances, employment status, level of encouragement, family responsibilities, and their intent to transfer. Their model supported the notion that drop out was directly related to the environmental factors present in the life of nontraditional students.

In direct opposition to Tinto’s model of social integration, Bean & Metzner (1985) proposed that environmental factors played a larger role in student departure—when these factors were less than conducive, students opted to drop out. While this research was conducted on students attending four-year institutions, it expanded the study of retention to consider the persistence habits of nontraditional students. The theoretical work of Tinto and studies specific to the experiences of students attending commuter schools—who overwhelmingly identify as nontraditional—infuenced student retention scholars to consider the persistence habits of student
attending community colleges. Student success professional would need to focus their attention on community college students as this population of student was fast becoming the majority among undergraduates in the United States.

Persistence among Community College Students

As previously stated, preliminary retention models (Astin, 1968, 1975; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993; Bean, 1980, 1983) concentrated on traditional students attending traditional four-year, residential institutions. These studies provided predictive validity for the case of traditional students however; these same studies had less validity when tested on community college students. Astin (1968, 1975) and Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) based successful retention on the ability of a student to academically and socially integrate into the college environment, however, these findings do not correlate with community college students (Wild & Ebbers, 2002).

Currently, one of the greatest challenges facing community college is student persistence and the ability of the institution to retain students to completion (Stuart, Rios-Aguilar, & Deil-Amen 2014). Far more than universities, community colleges have an especially significant problem retaining their student population (Crisp & Mina, 2012). Pruett & Absher (2015), report that among institutions of higher education, community colleges have the lowest retention rates, and students of color, male students in particular, are at far greater risk of early departure (Wood & Palmer, 2015). In order to address the issue of retention within community colleges, scholars must conduct research specific to the factors that impede student success by carrying out empirical studies that specifically seeks to understand the population of student that attend these types of institutions.

In general, the academic and persistence habits of community college students are drastically different from those attending four-year institutions. Two-year community college
students differ from four-year students in that, the community college post large numbers of nontraditional students, making it less likely these students will complete a degree or certificate (Yu, 2015). Community colleges also tend to attract large numbers of minority students. Research indicates that community college remains the predominate entry point for students of color (Perrakis, 2008) and this is especially true for Black male students (Wood & Palmer, 2015; Urias & Wood, 2014). According to The Century Foundation, a task force working to bridge the higher education divide, between 1994 and 2006, the population of Whites attending community college decreased from 73 percent to 58 percent, while Black and Hispanic representation increased from 21 percent to 33 percent during that same time period (The Century Foundation, 2013).

Community college students also tend to be first-generation (Kane & Rouse, 1999), academically, socially, and economically underprepared (Pruett & Absher, 2015; Wild & Ebbers, 2002), which in most cases equates to students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This means that large faction of students enter the learning environment requiring remediation in order to academically qualify for college-level course work. Among students enrolled in community college, between 2003 and 2009, 68 percent report taking at least one remedial class with almost half of the incoming students taking two or more remedial courses and 26 percent taking remedial courses in different subjects (Chen, 2016). Additionally, most community college students are balancing other responsibilities that often complicate their ability to adequately commit to the academic and social integration habits that scholars believe are necessary for successful completion. These and other factors contribute to the lack of student persistence within community colleges. In order to address the issue of community college persistence; scholars must stress the importance of research initiatives that seek to identify new
theories and persistence models specifically for community college students (Wild & Ebbers, 2002).

Semester-by-semester persistence is another vital component needed to increase the rate of student completion within institutions of higher education, especially in community colleges. Early studies (Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993; Astin, 1968, 1975; Bean, 1980, 1983) began to highlight this distinction; however, persistence in community college remains an exceptionally difficult component of retention. As previously mentioned, non-traditional students, first-generation, and students needing remediation are some of the extenuating circumstances that impact community college retention—student intentionality is another component complicating the issue of community college persistence.

Community colleges prepare students for a number of pathways—transfer to four-year institutions, career programs, and reverse transfer, while also providing support to academically disadvantaged students, English as a second language learners, and offering courses to students who have no intent on receiving a degree or certificate. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 23.5 percent of the 2012 cohort of students completed a public community college degree or certificate by 2015, and that percentage point has been consistent since 1999 fluctuating by two to three percentage points in any given year during that same time period (nces.ed.gov).

To completely understand the perplexing issue of community college persistence, scholars need an understanding of the background and educational goals of students attending community college (Crisp & Mina, 2012). Scholars have taken note and realize that community college students are not homogenous; the study of community college students need to specifically consider the experience of the diverse groups assembled. One way this goal is
accomplished is by conducting research that places a greater focus on those deemed to be most vulnerable. One such population is Black males.

Wood & Palmer (2015) report that despite the many benefits associated with attaining an education, Black males have made minimal advancements in postsecondary education. Since public community college is the primary entry point for Black male students (Wood & Palmer, 2015; Urias & Wood, 2014); scholarly research in this area, for this student segment, is most beneficial to community colleges and their vitality in American society.

Influences Impacting the study of Black Male Persistence

Much of the literature on Black males presumes that success indicators are the same for both Black males attending two and four-year institutions, however this assertion is erroneous—postsecondary Black males are not a monolithic group (Harper & Nichols, 2008; Wood, 2013). As there are general differences in the academic and persistence habits of Black males attending four-year institutions there are also significant differences in the academic and persistence habits between Black males attending community college and those that attend four-year institutions (Harris & Wood, 2013). Treating this segment as a homogenous group does not acknowledge the diverse backgrounds, social interactions, and affiliations that impact the selection in the type of institution they choose, their educational path, academic decisions, and persistence habits. In addition, conducting research that fails to accurately reflect in-group differences does not help to address the prevalence of deficit-based outcomes—since much of the research conducted on postsecondary Black males does not recognize the vast intricacies within this segment.

According to Wood (2013), understanding the educational complexities of Black males is key to creating programs, policies, and activities that meet the specific needs of the various student subgroups within the segment of postsecondary Black males.
As previously stated, there is extensive scholarship on the retention and persistence of students attending four-year institutions and scant research on understanding persistence at community colleges. This unfortunate trend deserves attention as public two-year community colleges serve as the primary entry point for Black males—where 70.5 percent will enroll—in contrast to only 28.5 percent who enroll in public four-year colleges (Wood & Harris, 2014). Harris & Wood (2013), report that the scholarly pre-occupation with men of color attending 4yr intuitions has created a gap in the literature concerning men attending community college. As a historically underserved and underrepresented segment in higher education, it is imperative that empirical studies consider the in-group differences based on institution type (Palmer et. al., 2014). Mason (1998), considered one of the pioneering figures to study retention of Black men, published an article—"A Persistence Model for African American Male Urban Community College Students”—which is considered to be the formative piece of research on men of color in community college (Harris & Wood, 2013). However, since that time, scant research has been dedicated to the study of Black males attending community college. Between 2001 and 2009 there were only nine published studies (Hagedorn, Maxwell, & Hampton, 2007; Glenn, 2003; Flowers, 2006; Pope, 2006; Bush, Bush, & Wilcoxson, 2009; Freeman & Huggans, 2009; Harper, 2009; Perrakis, 2008; and Ray, Carley, & Brown, 2009) with a specific focus on Black males attending community college.

Then in 2009, the Obama administration created the 21st Century Education Initiative aimed at creating an additional 5 million community college graduates by 2020 (Kanter, Ochoa, Nassif, & Chong, 2011); scholars, policy makers, and higher education professionals began a concerted effort to understand the complexities of retaining Black males attending community college. As a result, since 2010, ten more peer-reviewed articles and two book chapters have
been published (Wood & Harris, 2014). However, while there has been a renewed interest in successfully retaining students in community college, empirical research on the persistence habits of Black males continues to overwhelmingly reflect the experiences of Black males attending four-year institutions (Wood, 2013; Wood & Turner, 2011). Wood (2013) conducted a study that added credence to the notion that although Black males share the same racial make-up and gender identity, there are vast in-group differences based on institutional type. Wood’s research was based on an earlier study conducted by Flowers (2006)—the first of its kind—that specifically studied the social and academic integration habits of Black males attending two-year and four-year institutions. The study concluded that the social and academic integration habits among Black males attending two-year colleges are vastly different from that of their four-year counterparts. The study found that overall, Black males attending four-year institutions had higher educational aspirations. Men attending two-year institutions were less likely to participate in study groups; communicate out-of-class with faculty members about academic issues; discuss academic plans with advisors; participate in school clubs; participate in musical and fine arts activities; intramural sports, sanctioned sports; and engage in entertainment activities with friends (Wood, 2013). These studies, the only two that specifically focus on Black males entering and attending two and four-year institutions provide important data in understanding the differences among Black male collegians (Wood & Harrison, 2014).

Among Black males in community college, research found an overrepresentation in remedial education and dropout rates; underrepresentation in the number of students receiving certificates or degrees and transferring to four-year institutions (Wood, 2013). Wood & Harris (2014) conducted independent t-tests revealing that the institution selection process for Black males attending community college is primarily based on the desire to live at home, the open-
admissions policy, the school being the same as one attended by the parent, and the ease of the institution’s acceptance of college credit.

Research also supports the divide in background differences in two and four-year collegiate Black males. Data from research found that background characteristics, such as age, parent’s education, and family support are all indicators of community college persistence (Wood, 2013). While student age does not equate to academic completion for Black men attending community college (Mason, 1998; Palmer et. al., 2014), younger students are more likely to persist (Hagedorn et. al., 2007; Wood, 2013). More than those at four-year institutions, Black males attending community college tend to be older and have a higher probability of shouldering dependents, such as, children and a spouse (Palmer et. al., 2014). Due to the prevalence of delayed entry into postsecondary education, Black males tend to have less preparation in subjects such as, foreign language, mathematics, and science.

This group also tends to have lower degree expectations; they view school as a means-to-an-end to increase their economic and social mobility (Wood & Harris, 2014). Institution and program satisfaction have also been found to be an indicator of persistence among Black men attending community college. Strayhorn (2011) used data from the Community College Student Experience Questionnaire (CCSEQ) and found that student age and out-of-school responsibility level was the most salient to perceived satisfaction in community college. This research also found that older students, more than younger students, reported higher levels of institutional satisfaction. Mason (1998), reported that those with stated education goals tend to persist more than those without specific education goals—this finding was later supported by additional researchers (Freeman, 2003; Mosby, 2009; Perrakis, 2008; and Riley, 2007; Wood, 2013; Palmer et. al., 2014). Personal and family income levels are also considerable variables predictive of
collegiate success (Wood, 2013). Students who lack financial stability and/or who are financially responsible for others are less likely to persist and more prone to early departure (Wood & Palmer, 2015).

Having a sense of spirituality or a belief in a higher power has also been found to have a positive impact on community college Black males. Wood & Hilton (2012) examined data from 28 Black males attending community college and found five ways in which spirituality was most impactful to their pursuit of education. Spirituality helped to reduce feelings of alienation, inspired students to continuously pursue their academic goals, provided purpose to their pursuits, inspired resilience to overcome challenges that threaten their academic success and lastly spirituality inspired this group to focus on their goals instead of being distracted by personal and social stimuli. While the research on in-group differences between Black males attending two and four-year institutions is limited, the aforementioned research provides support to the notion that scholarly inquiry conducted on postsecondary Black males must consider in-group differences to accurately capture the experiences of the various sub-groups within this segment. The literature presented, details the importance of conducting scholarly inquiry specific to the underserved and underrepresented populations in higher education; taking into consideration the unique social, academic, and personal challenges, they face in their pursuit of attaining education. This literature also supports the notion of conducting research that is cognizant to in-group differences based on institution type. In order to effectively provide impactful outcomes, regarding the persistence habits of Black males attending community college, this research has a sole focus on Black males attending community college.
Chapter Summary

This Chapter presented the theoretical framework selected for this study as well as gave an overview of relevant literature as it pertains to the persistence of Black males attending community college. The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework, which is a framework that structures research questions to better understand the achievements of underrepresented groups, for this study, Black males attending community college. Harper’s framework is used in conjunction with the principle of naming one’s own experience of Ladsons-Billings & Tate’s (1995) critical race theory of Education. This principle supports Harper’s framework because it is used to speak power to the experiences that help Black men to persist to graduation in the face of documented barriers.

This chapter also presented a review of relevant literature pertaining to the study of persistence and the influences that impact the persistence of Black males attending community college. The literature revealed that addressing issues of persistence among Black males attending community college requires a paradigm shift in the approach to understanding Black males and their persistence in community college (Wood & Palmer, 2015). Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the persistence of postsecondary students and much of this research has been conducted by studying traditional students attending traditional four-year institutions. Early retention models created by Astin (1968, 1975) and Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) based successful persistence on the ability of a student to academically and socially integrate into the college environment. However, subsequent research (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1978, 1980, 1995) found that commuter students and nontraditional students—who share many of the same academic, background, and environmental circumstances as community college students—differed from four-year students in that they had various environmental and
socioeconomic factors that greatly impacted their ability to persist. This shift influenced scholars to conduct research specific to students attending community college, however this research did not accurately reflect the experiences of Black males attending community college, as this group continues to have the lowest persistence and completion rates among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups.

A review of literature also revealed the current challenges in accurately tracking the academic persistence of community college Black males and detailed the importance of conducting research specific to this sub-segment of postsecondary Black males. Conducting research with a specific focus on this segment helps to highlight the challenges faced, but more importantly, it allows research conducted to provide outcomes that directly influence Black males attending community. After reviewing relevant literature, this researcher believes that an anti-deficit approach to researching the persistence of Black males attending community college is an appropriate model as it can be used to counterbalance research that highlights underachievement with research that has a focus on success; challenging the stigma of the perpetually unsuccessful undergraduate Black male.
CHAPTER 3

Introduction

This study seeks to provide a detailed account of the personal and institutional experiences that encourage first-time, full-time Black male students to persist toward successful completion of an associate degree or certificate. This mixed method study also seeks to discover the impact that these experiences have on their ability to successfully complete a program of study. In an effort to provide a counter-narrative to the plethora of deficit-based research regarding postsecondary Black males, this study is guided by the CRT principle of “naming one’s own reality” and Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement model, which is being used as process framework in the hope of adding to the body of literature on Black males attending community college.

As a process framework, Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework is used as a lens to explore and extrapolate the instances of academic success experienced by this student group. The research question presented for this study seeks to understand how Black males perceive their ability to persist to graduation. The study is guided by the following research question:

1. How do personal and/or institutional experiences impact the persistence of first-time, full-time Black males attending community college?

Sub-questions assisting in this research are:

a. What pre-college experiences contributed to this segment’s ability to start and persist through community college?

b. Once enrolled, what personal and/or institutional perceptions does this segment attribute to their ability to persist to graduation?
c. What are the post-college plans for this segment and were these plans instrumental in helping them to persist?

**Methodological Design**

Drawing from a pragmatic paradigm, a mixed methodological design is used to conduct research with the use of a web survey and a semi-structured interview protocol. According to Ponterotto (2005), the selection of a research paradigm is important to the overall design of the study, as it guides the philosophical assumptions, tools, instruments, participants, and methods used in the study.

Pragmatism popularized in the 1960s grew out of the philosophical differences of research purists who believed in the incompatibility of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Pragmatists argue that research should instead use a method and philosophy that seeks to combine the insights of quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Onwuegbuzie, 2002; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This approach called mixed method research, is a technique used to combine quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. This methodology is generally used when seeking to gain a better understanding of a research problem; this combination can provide new insight and new ways to understand data (Creswell, 2015). This distinction is important as this research is rooted in a mixed method design that seeks to examine the study of Black male persistence from an alternative perspective. It is generally agreed that the majority of scholarship on Black males has a primary focus on the academic deficiencies present in this student group; however, this study seeks to understand the factors that influence academic success.

In order to adequately examine this position, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data is necessary to provide an information rich counter-narrative to the established
perspective regarding this student segment. As a result, this research employs a convergent mixed method research design, which means that data is collected and analyzed in each phase of research, with the intent of merging the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Selecting a mixed method design is appropriate as the convergent design is used when research seeks to advance multiple perspectives on a particular subject matter (Creswell, 2015). The first phase of research will collect quantitative data through the use of a web-based survey and the second phase of the study will collect qualitative data through the use of semi-structured interviews. Selecting a mixed method approach is appropriate for this study since this research seeks to give credence to the participant’s experience on how and why they decide to persist, and these experiences are counter to the experiences that the scholastic community often report as their “reality”. The collection of quantitative data will assist in the discovery of trends that lends to the ability of this segment to persist and the qualitative portion of this research allows participants to express their realities as it pertains to their perception of their journey to academic success. Additionally, the use of semi-structured interviews gives significant attention to the participant’s voice, allowing their experiences and perceptions to guide the results of the study. Furthermore, Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework supports the selected research design as this framework positions interview questions to explore the factors that influence success instead of the prevailing research structure that explores this segment in a way that emphasizes academic underachievement and disengagement. This research will also rely on the counter-storytelling aspect of Critical Race Theory of Education, which will give participants the opportunity to voice their lived experiences that have assisted them to persist to graduation.

to adequately study community college Black male persistence. Additionally, the research question and sub-questions created for this study are designed to highlight participant experiences in six researchable dimensions of achievement along three critical pipeline points in their education journey (Pre-College Socialization and Readiness, College Achievement, and Post College Success).

Lastly, the overall research methodology and the use of Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework support the researcher’s intent of exploring and understanding the factors that contribute to the persistence of Black males in community college, with the hope of identifying areas of strength that can be duplicated and emulated to encourage and assist larger numbers of Black males to realize the goal of graduation.

**Sample Population**

The research site selected for this study is located in the Midwestern section of the United States in the urban metropolis of Chicago, Illinois. The participants selected for this study identity as Black males, reside in the city of Chicago, and attend The City Colleges of Chicago (CCC). The City Colleges of Chicago is the largest community college system in the state of Illinois, composed of seven colleges and six satellite sites that serve over 100,000 students across the city of Chicago. In addition to their ethnic identity, participants will also have to meet the following criteria:

- Be actively in pursuit of a degree or certificate conferred by the City Colleges of Chicago.
- Be a first-time, full-time student who entered any of the seven City College campuses in the fall semester of 2016.
Ethnicity, the first criteria, was chosen for the expressed purpose of this study, which is to better understand the persistence habits for Black male students. Participant area of study may vary; however, all participants are on track to receive either an advance certificate and/or an associate in arts, science, general studies or applied science degree from one of the City Colleges of Chicago. Lastly, the third criteria was chosen to meet the guidelines set by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System—participants selected must be on track to graduate in the Spring or Summer semester of 2019.

In an effort to gain access to the research site and participants for this study, written communication was sent to the president of each college and the department responsible for approving submissions to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is the Educational Quality department at the district office of the City Colleges of Chicago. The letter introduced the researcher and gave an overview and purpose of the study. Upon receipt of site and participant approval from the City Colleges of Chicago, the first phase of research began. During this phase, web-based surveys were administered through the email account of Black male students who met the study population criteria. Quantitative research was conducted by first accessing CCC student demographic data via the district’s in-house data warehouse called OpenBook—data collected was specific to the study population criteria. Data requested included student ID#s, student email addresses, grade point average (GPA), number of credits earned, and total number of terms enrolled. Data received from OpenBook was not used as identifiers for students, but as a mechanism to determine that students met the expressed study population criteria. During the second phase of the research process, students who elected to participate were asked to complete one-on-one, face-to-face interviews which consisted of one research question, three sub-questions, and fourteen probing questions. Conducting qualitative data
collection, purposeful sampling was the sampling strategy used for this study, as it used when seeking to better understand a phenomenon by studying those most affected (Creswell, 2015). Conducting homogenous sampling, a form of purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to intentionally pursue respondents who could provide rich information regarding the significant factors that contribute to their ability to persist toward successful completion of a certificate or degree from a community college. In order to conduct face-to-face interviews, upon approval, this researcher arranged a meeting place on each CCC campus to hold participant interviews in half-hour-to-one-hour time slots. Participants had the option to choose which campus or other location they wanted to conduct their interview.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Methods

Conducted from an anti-deficit perspective, in terms of research instrumentation, quantitative data was collected through the uses of a ten-question, web-based survey and qualitative data was collected through the use of a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A and B). The recruitment process was conducted over a seven-week period and the web-based survey doubled as the recruitment tool used to solicit participation for face-to-face interviews. At the conclusion of the recruitment period, those who agreed to face-to-face interviews were contacted via telephone and text message to set up a meeting time and location. Directly after the online survey participation concluded, all interviews were scheduled and conducted over a two-week period. In addition, during each phase of the study—online survey, telephone contact, and during face-to-face interviews—it was communicated that participation was voluntary. Participants were aware that there was no compensation for their participation in either the survey or interviews. However, in order to solicit participation in the qualitative portion of the study, participants were offered a chance to win one of five ten-dollar Amazon gift
cards to be distributed once the study was complete. Also, during face-to-face interviews, additional demographic data was collected through the use of a participant demographic form (see Appendix C), which was distributed at the onset of face-to-face interviews and follow-up contact was conducted as needed.

In terms of data collection, a mixed methodology was used because it allowed the researcher to better understand and explore the personal and institutional perceptions held by Black male students who have since graduated or who are approaching graduation from a community college. This mixed method study also seeks to describe these experiences and uncover how these experiences may have impacted their decision to persist to graduation. Selecting this means of inquiry is sufficient since, the use of in-depth interviewing in qualitative research gives “voice” to a situation and an opportunity to probe deeper into a phenomenon (Berry, 1999).

The creation of quantitative and qualitative interview questions used in this study relied on Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework. Harper’s framework makes general suggestions on the types of questions to ask to better understand the academic success of underrepresented populations—questions for this study are intentionally framed to learn about the academic success of Black male students attending community college. This framework is also designed to provide participant experiences along six researchable dimensions of achievement along three critical pipeline points in their education journey (Pre-College Socialization and Readiness, College Achievement, and Post College Success). At the participant’s request, interviews were conducted on one of the seven City College of Chicago campuses or at a location of their choosing and interviews were held in half-hour to one-hour sessions.
Data Analysis

Conducting data analysis is the process of transforming massive amounts of data into research findings (Patton, 2002) and the data analysis portion of this study was performed for both the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The survey tool used to conduct research for this study was prepared through Qualtrics, CCC’s in-house survey application. Qualtrics contains a data analysis feature that displays results for the instrument, provides reports displaying answer frequency and outlines trends and similarities (see Appendix D, for the Qualtrics report).

Qualitative Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative data analysis portion was conducted through a multi-step process, which included, preparing, organizing, exploring, and coding the data (Creswell, 2015). During the research process, participants completed a demographic form and an interview protocol consisting of one research question, three sub-questions, and fourteen probing questions—and all interview sessions were captured though audio recordings. Immediately following the collection of data, qualitative analysis began with the preparation and organization of data. As part of the data analysis process, a transcriptionist was used to transcribe all interviews. Once transcription was complete, accuracy checks were performed by giving participants the opportunity to review and make clarifications, additions or deletions to all transcribed material. The researcher also used this time to ask follow questions and sought clarification statements to ensure the information captured was correct.

Following transcription, the researcher began the process of exploring and coding the data. During this step, the data was analyzed using the constant comparative method—the
process of slowly developing categories of information (Creswell, 2015)—and a color-coding scheme to organize the data into themes, categories, and codes.

Based on the points along the education pipeline outlined in Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework, the prominent themes include: 1). Pre-College Socialization and Readiness, 2). College Achievement and 3). Post-College Success (see Table 2). Within each of the themes, categories and codes will be developed based on the researchable dimensions of achievement included in the anti-deficit achievement framework. For pre-college socialization and readiness, the researchable dimensions are familial factors, K-12 forces and out-of-school college prep resources. Within college achievement the researchable dimensions include, classroom experiences and enriching educational experiences. Finally, in the education pipeline point of post-college success, the researchable dimension is matriculation to a graduate program or entry into a STEM career. For the purpose of this study, the post-college success pipeline point and the researchable dimension deviates from Harper’s framework. His model was designed for Black male students attending four-year institutions, and this study is concerned with community college students; as a result, post-college success for this segment would be either matriculation into a four-year institution or entry into the workforce.
### Table 2

Anti-deficit Achievement Themes and Researchable Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-deficit Achievement Theme</th>
<th>Researchable Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-College Socialization &amp; Readiness</td>
<td>Familial Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K-12 School Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out-of-School College Prep Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Achievement</td>
<td>Classroom Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enriching Educational Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-College Success</td>
<td>Four-year University Enrollment or Career Entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethical Considerations**

In an effort to provide continuous protections for the participants of this study, this researcher took several steps to provide sufficient levels of trust. During the beginning of both the first phase of quantitative research and the second phase of qualitative research, participants were given formal communication detailing the nature and purpose of the study (see Appendix E, F, and G). This communication outlined the interview process and identified protections built into the study. In order to protect the identity of participants, during the first phase of research, survey participants anonymously provided information and during the second phase of the interview process, pseudonyms were utilized throughout the research process. In addition to the use of pseudonyms, research data is aggregated to further shield participant confidentiality. To add additional measures of protections and trust, participants were able to choose any one of the seven CCC campuses or a location of their choosing for an interview site and participants were
allowed to opt out of any interview question, as well as stop the interview at any point during the process.

**Trustworthiness**

In the process of validating research data, for this the study, the subject of trust is of great importance. To ensure trustworthiness and strengthen the validity of this study within the field of higher education, multiple research techniques were employed. This was done through the use of data triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of documents, data, and other individuals to corroborate or refute what is learned during the interview process (Creswell, 2015). For this study, a demographic form, member checking—asking one or more of the study participants to check the accuracy of findings—and peer debriefing will be used to triangulate data results; adding credibility, transferability and reliability to the research findings.

In terms of member checking, participants will be encouraged not only to review transcripts, but also the resulting data, codes, themes, and categories. Participants will have the opportunity to check for validity, accuracy and to confirm or reject the findings. In order to conduct peer debriefing, the researcher will seek out an outside or external person or people who can provide informed evaluation or give perspective for the data uncovered.

**Assumptions**

1. It is assumed that the participants will respond openly, honestly, and to the best of their abilities in answering interview questions.

2. It is assumed that the sample population of participants chosen for the study are of adequate size for the findings of this study to have value.
Research Limitations of the Study

Research for this study involves a very select group of community college Black male students attending the City Colleges of Chicago. Results of this study may not be generally applicable to all Black males attending community college.

Delimitations of the Study

The participants in the study were chosen across a seven-campus community college district in an effort to compile an adequate sample size.

Researcher Subjectivity

In research, addressing the role the researcher’s subjectivity is paramount, and according to Peshkin (1998), researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity through out every step of the research process. Although I am not a Black man, I am a daughter, mother and a sister to Black males; as the researcher for this study, I do identify with Black culture and norms through my own lived experiences. I am also a student success professional in the community college sector of higher education and this research topic was chosen due to my personal and professional experiences with the lack of academic success for Black males. As a result, I am aware that I bring my own set of experiences, assumptions and perceptions to the research process. Therefore, I have to be open to the possibility, that while the participants of this study identify as Black males, their experiences and perceptions may be vastly different from my own. In an effort to continuously identify and account for my own subjectivity throughout the research process, I will triangulate data through the use of member checking and peer debriefing.
CHAPTER 4

Quantitative Findings

The purpose of this study is to add to the existing literature on undergraduate Black males by exploring the phenomenon of persistence among Black men attending community college.

The results of this mixed method study are presented in two chapters. This chapter presents the quantitative findings and analysis, followed by chapter five, which presents the qualitative findings and analysis. Consistent with a convergent methodology, an intersection of findings and analysis for both quantitative and qualitative outcomes is presented in an additional chapter.

Quantitative data was gathered through a ten-question, web-based survey administered by email and qualitative data was gathered through face-to-face, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with six participants. Data analysis for the quantitative portion of the study was conducted through descriptive statistics and the qualitative portion of the study was interpreted through a multi-step coding process. The findings for both the quantitative and qualitative data are situated along the three education pipeline points outlined in Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework. The pipeline points include pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success.

Through the use of Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework, data is analyzed to answer the following research question and sub questions:

1. How do personal and/or institutional experiences impact the persistence of first-time, full time Black male students attending community college?
   a. What pre-college experiences contributed to this segment’s ability to start and persist through community college?
b. Once enrolled, what personal and/or institutional perceptions does this segment attribute to their ability to persist to graduation?

c. What are the post-college plans for this segment and were these plans instrumental in helping them to persist?

**Quantitative Data Collection**

Institutional data on the persistence of Black males attending the City Colleges of Chicago was retrieved from OpenBook, which is CCC’s in-house database that contains student demographic and academic data. As previously stated, the population chosen for this study are first-time, full-time Black male students who entered the City Colleges of Chicago in the Fall semester of 2016. According to the U.S. Department of Education, students have persisted if they complete a degree or certificate within 150% of the normal time to complete, which for community college is three years. In the Fall semester of 2016, a total of 968 Black males entered the City Colleges of Chicago and 507 of those Black males met the criteria for the study population. In order to meet the persistence metric set by the U.S. Department of Education, a student in this cohort must complete a credential no later than Summer semester 2019. Being that this study is strictly concerned with the success of Black males, the sample population for this study only consists of those who have since graduated from CCC or those who are on track to graduate in the Spring or Summer semester 2019. As a result, the study population consists of 113 Black males; 71 who have since graduated from CCC and 45 who are on track to graduate in either Spring or Summer semester 2019. As an additional note regarding this study population—at the end of the Summer 2019 semester, the final number of Black males in this cohort could potentially fluctuate since students may not successfully complete during the current semester and/or they may choose not to persist through to the last semester.
Figure 2: Quantitative Study Population

In terms of the quantitative survey protocol a ten-question, web-based survey was sent by email to the study population over a seven-week period. The first half of the questionnaire solicited demographic information and the last half of the survey pertained to questions along the education pipeline. Two questions pertained to the study participant’s experiences before college during their grammar school and high school years, one survey question pertained to in-college experiences, one question sought to understand their post college plans and the last question was posed to solicit respondent perceptions regarding their ability to persist to graduation. During the survey recruitment phase, in an effort to entice participation, there were three versions of an introduction email created, and sent approximately two to three times per week during the data collection period. The introduction email introduced the researcher, stated the purpose of the study, and invited the reader to participate in the study by clicking the hyperlink embedded in the email. Once participants clicked the hyperlink, they were given access to the consent form. There were four participants who did not agree to participate, once that was indicated, those individuals were given a thank you message and allowed to exit the study. For those who agreed to participate by indicating “yes” on the consent form, they were
granted access to the survey. A total of twenty-six students responded to the survey. Quantitative data reveals that the median age of respondents for this study is twenty-three; seventy percent have no dependents and forty-eight percent of the respondents work at least part-time while attending school. In terms of quantitative inquiry, five of the ten research questions are structured to solicit participant data along the three education pipeline points and researchable dimensions, which include pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success.

As stated in the previous chapter, data analysis is conducted through a convergent design, which involves separate data collection and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative research for this study. The following pages present the quantitative data analysis based on the education pipeline points included in the anti-deficit framework, these pipeline points include, pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success.

**Pre-College Socialization and Readiness**

The first quantitative research question pertaining to pre-college socialization and readiness states: Prior to starting community college, which was more impactful in your ability to start and complete your degree or certificate? Participants were given five options, (a) family support (b) high school counselor (c) college prep-program (d) religious/spiritual guidance (e) other. For the purpose of this study, family support consists of positive emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and an overall expectation for a Black male to enter college from either a member of their nuclear, blended, or extended family. Additionally, a family member can also consist of an individual or individuals that a Black male feels a kinship or bond toward. The second option, high school counselor, pertains to school officials with the singular purpose of guiding students through the process to enter college. College prep-programs pertains
to any K-12 in-school or out-of-school program designed to introduce and prepare Black males for college. Option four, religious/spiritual guidance, refers to positive support or an expectation from a Black male’s church or spiritual community that places an emphasis on the pursuit of higher education. Lastly, the term “other” refers to any other form of support or encouragement that Black males attribute to their thought process and/or ability to enter college. The data reveals a strong correlation between Black male persistence and family support. Respondents also report that outside of the options given there were “other” factors that significantly contribute to their pre-college ambitions to start and complete a community college degree or certificate.

Table 3

Pre-College Socialization and Readiness (Question #1)

Question: Prior to starting community college, which was more impactful in your ability to start and complete your degree or certificate?

a. Family Support 35%
b. High school counselors 15%
c. College prep program 5%
d. Religious/spiritual guidance 10%
e. Other 35%

The second quantitative research question pertaining to pre-college socialization and readiness states: Prior to attending community college, who and/or which school agent was most responsible for how you thought about your ability to pursue college. Participants were given five options, (a) high school teachers or officials (b) school counselors (c) dual enrollment programs (d) college-prep program (e) other. Outside of high school teachers, high school
officials can be any authority figure in the K-12 school setting that provided support or encouragement for a Black male to enter college. As referenced above, high school counselor pertains to school officials with the singular purpose of guiding students through the process to enter college. Dual enrollment programs, the third option, refers to programs that allow high school students to acquire college credits while attending high school—this question specifically seeks to find out if an official, representative, or instructor from a dual enrollment program had an impact on their decision-making process to enter college. College-prep programs referenced above refers to any K-12 in-school or out-of-school program designed to introduce and prepare Black males for college. Again, this question seeks to find out if any officials or representatives from a college-prep program influenced a Black male’s decision to enter college. The last option, “other” refers to any other exposure or support from school agents or other academic resources and/or programs not listed as a choice to select. The data reveals a congruent relationship between Black male persistence and the influence of high school and/or school officials. Respondents also reported that school counselors are of significant support in their decision to consider and start secondary education. Black males also reported that “other” factors outside of school officials and college prep programs have helped them prepare and set the expectation to pursue college.
Table 4
Pre-College Socialization and Readiness (Question #2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Prior to attending community college, who and/or which school agent was most responsible for how you thought about your ability to pursue college.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. High school teacher or official</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School Counselor</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Dual enrollment program</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. college-prep program</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Other</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College Achievement**

The third quantitative research question pertains to college achievement and states:

Considering your in-college classroom experiences, how did you constructively respond to any instances of bias or stereotypes? Participants were given five options, (a) contacted a school official (b) consulted peers and/or family (c) voiced a counter-argument (d) relied on personal grit and perseverance (e) consulted a pastor or church official. For the purpose of this study, school official would be any community college authority figure, which includes, but is not limited to faculty members, departmental chairperson(s), mental health or wellness center counselors, and administrative or professional staff members. The second option, consulting peers and/or family members, refers to Black males confiding instances of bias or stereotypes to trusted individuals. Peers refer to individuals that Black males consider to be of equal standing, especially in terms of status, age, and cultural group. Referenced above, the term family refers to a member of the Black male’s nuclear, blended, or extended family. Confiding in these individuals can take on many purposes for Black males. One purpose could be to share the experience and express their feeling in a safe space; another purpose can be to discuss options on
how best to address instances of bias or stereotypes. As it relates to a Black male’s ability to constructively deal with instances of bias or stereotyping, voicing a counter-argument refers to the student’s ability to productively provide an opposing agreement when they face instances of bias or stereotypes in the classroom. Relying on personal grit and perseverance refers to a Black male’s ability to maintain his commitment to the long-term goal of graduation in spite of experiencing bias in the classroom. As an additional note, exercising personal grit is an individual’s internal motivation and can be used along with other coping mechanisms when Black males experience bias in the classroom. The last option, consulting a pastor or church official, refers to a Black male seeking counsel or guidance from his church or spiritual community on ways to cope and deal with instances of bias they may experience in the classroom. The data reveals that personal grit is the most important influence on in-college achievement. The data also reveals that while Black males may experience instance of bias or stereotyping; they do not contact school officials, instead they mainly choose to rely on their personal grit to preserve or they provide a counter-argument to instances of bias or stereotypes they experience in classroom settings.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Achievement (Question #3)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question: Considering your in-college classroom experiences how did you constructively respond to any instances of bias or stereotypes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Contacted a school official</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Consulted peers and/or family</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Voice a counter-argument</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Relied on personal grit and perseverance</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Consulted a pastor or church official</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post College Success

The next quantitative research question pertains to participant post-college plans, however, the last education pipeline point, for this study, deviates from the anti-deficit framework. Harper’s original framework was used to better understand the persistence habits of high achieving Black male’s attending four-year universities in STEM—post college persistence for the purpose of the original study is considered entry into a STEM workplace or matriculation to a graduate program. Since participants of this study will be graduating with an associate degree or certificate, post-college persistence is based on either matriculation to a four-year institution or entry into the workforce. Additionally, entering the workforce can be on a part-time or full-time basis and does not necessarily mean that the student does not intend to enter a four-year university at some point in the future. Participants of this study may also choose to continue their education through the City Colleges of Chicago by pursuing a second degree or certificate or continue to take courses to better prepare for transfer to a four-year institution. The fourth quantitative research question states: What are your post-college plans? Participants were given four options, (a) enter the workforce (b) enter a four-year university (c) continue your education at the city colleges of Chicago (d) none of the above. The data reveals that an overwhelming majority, seventy-five percent, plan to enter a four-year university and just twenty percent plan to enter the workforce. While the data indicates that at present no Black male in this cohort intends to continue their education at the City Colleges of Chicago, this same cohort may return at some point, as students commonly complete a degree or certificate from a community college and return to take courses to meet entrance requirements for programs at four-year institutions or some enter the workforce for a period of time and return to further their education.
Table 6

Post College Success (Question #4)

Question: What are your post-college plans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter the workforce</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter a four-year university</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue your education at the City Colleges of Chicago</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last quantitative research question pertains to the participant’s perception regarding their perceived ability to persist to graduation. The question asked Black males to reflect on their overall community college experience and states: While in community college, what experiences do you feel assisted you in your ability to be successful? Participants were given the opportunity to select a maximum of five out of eight options, (a) family support (b) religious/spiritual guidance (c) active participation in class (d) experiences with peers (e) extracurricular activities (f) experiences with faculty (g) campus resources (h) mentorship. The first and second options, family support and religious/spiritual guidance, has been defined above. The third option, active participation in class, refers to the level of intentional learning that a Black male exhibits in the classroom. Examples of active classroom participation are asking questions, providing feedback during lectures or open classroom discussion, submitting extra-credit assignments, visiting faculty during office hours or participating in tutoring or any other academic resource needed to supplement the learning process. As referenced above, peers refer to individuals that Black males consider to be of equal standing, especially in terms of status, age, and cultural group—experiences with peers, for the purpose of this study denotes experiences with peers that influence and support their ability to complete a community college
credential. This could be in the form of peer-to-peer mentorship or in the form of accountability partnerships. Option number five, extra-curricular activities refer to activities that do not fall within the scope of the regular academic curriculum. Extra-curricular activities can be academic or social, structured or non-structured, but to be deemed extra-curricular they must have no academic credit attached to performing these activities. Experiences with faculty refers to the effort a Black male takes in receiving or initiating a relationship with faculty members. The relationship can be with an in-class faculty member or a faculty member that they have become acquainted with throughout their tenure in the community college setting. Campus resources, option number eight, refers to services or programs offered to students; these resources are used to supplement or bolster the learning experience. For the purpose of this study, the use of campus resources for Black males attending community college refers to the frequency in which they seek out and use these services. Campus resources can be in the form of academic, social, financial, or social/emotional, as long as the service is used in an effort to meet the challenges and rigor of completing a community college degree. Lastly, mentorship refers to the guidance and support offered to a Black male attending community college from a more experienced and knowledgeable individual. For the purpose of this study, the mentor/mentee relationship can be of a personal or professional nature, however the relationship has to be one in which the mentor imparts knowledge that helps to guide a Black male through the social and/or academic rigor needed to complete a community college degree or certificate. The data reveals that active participation in class, family support and campus resources provide the most impact for Black males in assisting them to pursue and persist through to completion at a community college.
Table 7

Most Impactful Factors Leading to Persistence among Black Males attending Community College (Question #5)

Question: While in community college, what experiences do you feel assisted you in your ability to be successful?

- a. Family support 19%
- b. Religious/spiritual guidance 6%
- c. Active participation in class 21%
- d. Experience with peers 16%
- e. Extra-curricular activities 7%
- f. Experience with faculty members 9%
- g. Campus resources 15%
- h. Mentorship 7%

Quantitative Discussion

Positioned from an anti-deficit perspective, Black male persistence is most dependent on the following factors: family support, active participation in class, experiences with peers, experiences with faculty members, and the use of campus resources. Based on the education pipeline points (pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success) outlined in Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit framework, the data reveals that persistence among Black males attending community college is strongly impacted by the influences of these factors. Family support, considered to be one of the most influential components to Black male persistence in community college is crucial at every point along the education pipeline, but especially at the pre-college socialization and readiness stage. Active participation in class, experiences with peers and faculty members and the use of campus
resources are crucial for college achievement. Post-college success was not measured based on these influences; however, it is hypothesized that these factors influence a Black male’s post college decisions. Refer to Appendix H for a complete listing of the most influential factors along each pipeline point. Based on the quantitative findings presented in this chapter, academic success is attainable for community college Black males. Presented in the next chapter are the qualitative finding and analysis, which will provide and in-depth account of the lived experiences of this student population.
CHAPTER 5

Qualitative Results

Utilizing a convergent methodological design, the following chapter presents the qualitative data collection and analysis for this study. As previously stated, mixed method research is conducted on first-time, full-time Black males who are approaching or have since graduated from the City Colleges of Chicago. This research is conducted from an anti-deficit perspective with the hope of gaining a better understanding for the influences and motivation that impact persistence for this student group. In addition to Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework, the qualitative portion of the study also utilizes the counter-storytelling component of Ladson-Billings & Tate’s (1995) critical race theory of education. In the qualitative portion of this study, the component of counter-storytelling is especially important since it gives voice, credence, and validity to the experiences that have influenced Black males to successfully complete a community college degree and these experiences are in direct opposition to the majority of research on undergraduate Black males that highlight underachievement and academic failure for this student population.

Qualitative Data Collection

In an effort to recruit participants for the qualitative portion of the study, the last question of the web survey asked participants—who were willing—to provide additional feedback in the form of one-on-one, face-to-face interviews and a total of eleven respondents indicated interest. Respondents were asked to provide their email address, phone number, and student identification number in order to be contacted to set-up an interview. The qualitative interview protocol consists of a demographic questionnaire, one research question, three sub-questions and fourteen probing questions. Also, interviews were captured by audio, transcribed, and coded to highlight
common themes—in total six Black males agreed to participate in this portion of the study. All of the participants attended CCC on a full-time basis and are between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, with the exception of one student who was thirty-seven years old. All the participants are currently single with exception of the oldest participant who is married with two children. Three of the students have since graduated and three are on track to graduate from CCC in either the Spring or Summer semester of 2019. Of the students who have since graduated, all three received transfer degrees and two of the three students graduated with a designation of high honors—which means their cumulative grade point average was 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale. Of those who are on track to graduate in Spring or Summer semester of 2019, they are also pursuing transfer degrees. Lastly, the participants were given pseudonyms by the researcher to preserve anonymity—for a graphical summary of participants see the demographic information below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Graduation Status</th>
<th>Attended Full time or Part time?</th>
<th>Degree Earned</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Associate in Arts - Business</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manny</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Associate in Arts-Psychology</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Associate in Arts</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Associate in Arts - Criminal Justice</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Dependents</td>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Enrollment Year</td>
<td>Enrollment Type</td>
<td>Degree Program</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Associate in Science</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Associate in Science – Computer Science</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study Participants**

James attends the City College campus located on the Southside of Chicago. James is twenty-five years old, single, with no dependents. James is currently employed full-time and attends community college full time. James was primarily raised by his father as an only child, but he does have a half-sister, on his mother’s side with whom he has just recently formed a family bond. According to James she has been one of his primary influences to pursue education, “My sister got kids so she ain’t really got time to go to school so, she was really just happy that I was going to school, you know”. James was also incarcerated for two years and this experience influenced his determination to pursue upward mobility specifically through education. James is scheduled to graduate May 2019.

Manny is a twenty-one-year-old Black male who attended a college preparatory high school on the North side of Chicago. After high school, Manny was accepted to multiple four-year universities, however he chose to attend a community college because he did not secure adequate scholarship funds to pay the higher priced tuition at four-year institutions. In high school Manny played football and credits the opportunity to play team sports and the college preparatory environment of his high school as introduction to the rigor needed to successfully complete a college degree. His parents migrated to United States from Nigeria before he was born so Manny also identifies with the African culture of his parents. While his mother and
father did not attend college, he is not the first in his family to attend college, however, he is the
first to complete a degree. His older brothers and sisters have intermittently attended college over
the years but have yet to complete. While they did not finish, he does consider their experience
as motivation to start and pursue a degree. Also, being that his parents are originally from
Africa, early in his life the expectation to enter and complete college was an ever-present reality
for him. Manny gave some insight on this challenge.

So, yes college was always an option of course for me like my whole family came from
Nigeria my mom and dad so like that was like the biggest stress they put on all my
siblings. We had to like complete every level of school that we can cause that is why they
brought us here they wanted us to reach our full potential in all aspects of life so college
was always an option.

Samuel, born in Chicago and raised with his mom and dad on the Northside of Chicago;
he worked full-time while pursuing his degree. Samuel felt pressure from his mother, in
particular, to start and complete school because his siblings did not:

I would say the expectation was higher for me, as I am the first out of the three of us to
actually go to college. I think my mom pushed hard for me to finish and stick to my
studies and become something better than my brothers.

Samuel credits his career path to his high school hall proctor who told him about the field of
Psychology. After completing his bachelors degree, Samuel plans to pursue a career in the field
of Psychology.

William is the oldest participant in the qualitative portion of the study. He decided to
pursue a community college degree at the age of thirty-four. He is the second oldest of four
children; two boys and two girls and he was the only one to attend college. He is married with
two small children and he and his wife have completed a post-secondary degree. Of all the study participants, he is the only one that is currently working in his chosen career field, which is criminal justice; William is a Chicago police officer. William dropped out of school in his senior year of high school but graduated with high honors with his associate degree. William was primarily raised by his mother and grandmother and growing up he felt a need to financially help his family, which meant education was not a priority and as result the pursuit of education was not something, he felt was for him. He reports, “My first job was at the age of fifteen at Burger King.” At that time, his thought process was primarily concerned with the financial hardships his family was facing. He recalls his first job allowing him to financially help his family “I was paying her (my grandmother) $200 a month.” William has a desire to pursue a masters degree and often ponders the possibility of entering a program in the near future.

Lincoln is a twenty-year old man who was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and moved to the United States of America after completing high school at the age of sixteen. He was reared on the Northside of Chicago with his mother and two brothers. Both his parents graduated college in their home country. Lincoln is the only student currently enrolled in at a four-year university and he was selected as the candidate for valedictorian of the City College campus he attended. He currently attends Illinois State University, pursuing a career in medicine. While in community college Lincoln was active on campus, participating in a non-established social group for students interested in video gaming. While attending the City Colleges of Chicago, he was also an active member of One Million Degrees, which is a program that provides mentorship and moderate stipends to students attending community college. Lincoln was one of the few participants that was socially involved on campus while pursuing his degree. Lincoln spoke fondly of his social community on campus and credits it as one of the many tools in his tool kit
that influenced and motivated him to pursue and complete a degree. When asked about social activities he reports:

It was just a bunch of guys who loved playing video games, we would meet up on a Friday or on a Saturday and played 2K, Madden, and all that stuff. They had a ping pong table (on campus) and we would play ping pong for like three hours and just talk. I would go to the gym sometimes and play indoor soccer with a bunch of friends and during the summer some of my friends from Truman (City College) would go by the lake front—there is a tremendous soccer field—and we would play soccer. I think that kind of kept us motivated and I ended up making friends through some of my social activities.

Ernest is twenty-one years old and scheduled to complete an Associate in Science degree in Summer semester 2019. Currently, Ernest is unemployed and attends community college full time, which means he is able to concentrate solely on completing his studies. Ernest lives at home with parents who are both of African descent; Ernest was also born in Nigeria but was brought to America by his parents as a toddler. While he identifies with African culture, from his home life, he is very comfortable with American culture. Ernest is very focused on attending a four-year institution and tries to educate himself on how best to pursue a bachelors degree. Ernest credits his long-term career goals, as motivation to complete a community college degree. When asked what motivates him to continue his education, Ernest reports:

I try to look back at the end goals to figure out whether or not I want to finish something, then if the end goal is worth it you have to finish. It’s like if you start a project you want to finish, that is how I feel about college and with my education, it’s for later on in life and that is part of why I do it. During high school there were some tough times that were
challenging, but at the end day, I told myself, to get over it, so I could finish high school and so forth (community college and a bachelors degree), then I can do anything I want in life and on top of that my parents and family have also supported me so everything turns out too.

After graduation, Ernest plans to enter the four-year institution in the Fall semester of 2019.

Qualitative Findings Based on the Anti-deficit Achievement Framework

Qualitative data is analyzed to respond to the overall research question: How do personal and/or institutional experiences impact the persistence of first-time, full time Black male students attending community college? As previously stated, the qualitative interview protocol consists of a demographic questionnaire, one research question, three sub-questions and fourteen probing questions. Being that this study is positioned from an anti-deficit perspective, qualitative questions are composed to elicit factors that influence Black males to complete a community college credential. Finding are situated along the three education pipeline points outlined in Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework. The pipeline points include pre-college socialization and readiness, college achievement, and post-college success—within each pipeline point, there are researchable dimensions of success (familial factors, K-12 school forces, out-of-school college prep resources, classroom experiences, enriching educational experiences, and four-year university enrollment or career entry). In the following pages, the qualitative findings are outlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antivalent Achievement Themes and Researchable Dimensions</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-deficit Achievement Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-College Socialization &amp; Readiness</td>
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</table>
At the entry point of the education pipeline, the data was analyzed to answer the following sub-question: What pre-college experiences contributed to this segment’s ability to start and persist through community college? Based on the first anti-deficit achievement theme of pre-college socialization and readiness, research questions focus on the researchable dimensions; family factors, K-12 school forces, and out-of-school college preparatory resources. Family factors refer to the role that family, family dynamics, family expectations, and family support play in the role of a Black male’s decision to pursue a community college degree. As stated in the previous chapter, family is defined as a member of a Black male’s nuclear, blended, or extended family. A family member can also consist of an individual or individuals that a Black male feels a kinship or bond toward. K-12 school forces refers to the academic influences that occurred in the K-12 setting. This researchable dimension seeks to better understand the participant’s overall grammar school and high school educational background. This dimension also seeks to understand what encouragement or support teachers and/or school agents provided Black males that positively impacted their thought process or trajectory to pursue a college education. Out-of-school college preparatory resources refers to any preparatory programs Black males might have been exposed to during their developmental years. This dimension seeks to first understand the Black’s male’s motivation to pursue college and secondly to learn about any exposure to college they may have had in grammar school or high school that enhanced their
college readiness. The following section details the findings within each of the measurable dimensions of success for the pre-college socialization and readiness pipeline point.

Familial Factors

Questions for the first researchable dimension, familial factors, seeks to explore the influence that family, family dynamic and family support have on Black men and their decision to pursue a community college education. The majority of respondents report that the support of their immediate and extended family is instrumental in setting the expectation for college.

Samuel reported:

Well, my mom was very adamant about me sticking to my studies, my aunt is a librarian, so she was able to get books together and supplies for me to help me out.

Manny, whose parents immigrated to the United States from Nigeria, provided him support and an ever-present expectation for college;

My parents are definitely supportive, like they have always seen all I can do, and they know when I really put my foot down and focus then I can get a lot done. No matter what I decided to do as far as like my major they were going to be supportive, they just want me to finish college; that is the main goal so like to be able for them to (see) me finish my associate right now is huge for them.

Lincoln, who immigrated to the United States after completing his primary and secondary education in Nigeria, had support from his mother and siblings to start and complete a community college degree.

My mom was the major factor and my brothers, I have three older brothers who had already been in college. They came with me, but they started college before I did so I
had like a year where I did not go to college but they were already in college so it was pretty much like I had to go cause all of my brothers ahead of me were already in college.

He recalled his mother’s request for his first year of college:

Even the first year of college she pretty much said you can’t have a job you know she wanted me to do school full-time and then maybe consider having a job in the second year so she pretty much wanted me to get the first year of college done, get good grades so that I could actually be in a better position to be successful.

He also found a great deal support from his older brothers:

My brothers were all science majors so if I needed something, they could always help me like if I was having trouble in physics, chemistry, math I had another brother who had taken math classes and chemistry classes they knew the problem. I always had them as a resource so that kind of helped.

Ernest, who also immigrated to the United States with his parents as a young child, credits his parents support as a driving force in his decision to start and pursue a college education. He shared, “Children of immigrants are expected to be the best at everything, so my parents wanted me to get a college degree.” While there were high expectations, Ernest found his parents to be supportive, “When times were hard, my dad and my mom both talked to me to motivate me and also to help me out when I needed help.”

While the majority of respondents found family support as a motivating factor in their decision to pursue a community college degree, the older respondents—who did not enter community college immediately after high school—found little to no support from their immediate or extended family during their formative years. The motivation to pursue a college degree for the older respondents was primarily due to their desire to change the trajectory of their
life based on the circumstances that had occurred up until that point. James, 25, had been incarnated for two years shortly after graduating high school and decided to pursue an education after that experience.

When I was locked up it was like me being around the people, I am seeing like people older and they don’t have any education, or you know can’t read and not really doing nothing with themselves. It was like that kind of stuck with me. I (said to myself), I can’t be like them. I was (trying to) see what I can do with myself and I know I have aspiration of owning my own business and knowing that I have to have some kind of education to make this happen.

William, 37, dropped out of school in his senior year of high school. He reported, “I just felt like it wasn’t meant for me at that time.” At that time, the influence from his family was to work and earn money to support the household. William reports that he started working at the age of fifteen to help his grandmother and mother, however he found few opportunities.

It was just like one bum job to the next bum job, so I said that I needed an education. I went and got the GED and then I went and started working for this security company and that was no money.

At the age of 34, William decided to return to college to pursue a career in law enforcement.

I was at my security job, standing in front of the emergency room, and a monitor inside the waiting room flashed an ad saying the Chicago Police Department was hiring, and officers could make $72,000 per year; I didn’t know they made that much so I was like I will take the test. I knew the process would take 2 years.

William was determined to complete a degree in 2 years—in order to meet the education requirement and application deadline for the Chicago Police Department, “that is why I said I
was flying through school and that is how I started.” William attended full time with a wife and two children.

**K-12 School Forces**

The researchable dimension, K-12 school forces, seeks to explore the impact of the respondent’s primary and secondary educational background as it relates to the influence that school officials, dual enrollment and college preparatory programs have on their decision to pursue and complete a community college degree. As it pertains to the educational background all but one of the participants received their primary and secondary education through the American school system—they received K-12 instruction through the Chicago public school system and one participant attended a Chicagoland all-boys catholic high school. The data shows that while family support is an instrumental influencer; primary and secondary school officials provide significant support and motivation to pursue postsecondary education.

Manny recalled being in “gifted courses” and receiving encouragement by school officials in elementary school. He spoke about his middle school homeroom teacher who was a constant vessel of support and encouragement. Manny reported, “he was very supportive, he was always around.” As a consequence of early academic success and encouragement from primary school officials, Manny had decided in the fifth or sixth grade that he would attempt to enter a selective enrollment high school and after testing, he was accepted to his number one choice, Lane Technical College Precatory high school. He recalled a conversation with his homeroom teacher who stressed the importance of being diligent in the next phase of his education. Ernest states that many of his teachers in high school encouraged entry into a four-year university. Samuel recalled a high school hall proctor who encouraged him to pursue postsecondary education and influenced his career choice.
My senior year in high school I was influenced actually by my study hall proctors to consider a career in psychology. He talked about how he really enjoyed doing it and I know he got paid well, so it was really the ideal career for me. I learned about psychology, I took the class (while in college) and I thought about, is this what I will go to school for; this is what I am working toward in the future.

The data also supports the notion that even when there is a lack family support, school agents can make a meaningful impact on the Black male’s thought process on attaining education. James attended a Chicago public vocational high school, which means motivation from school agents would be more focused on career training; as James was approaching graduation from high school, he credits school agents for motivating and preparing him to enter an automotive program. At the end of his senior year, he was set to attend a school in St. Louis, however he was incarcerated shortly after graduating. While James lacked family encouragement to pursue postsecondary education, school agents guided, encouraged, and supported him to take the next step.

The data also reveals that dual enrollment and college preparatory programs were not frequently used, however Manny and Ernest attended college preparatory high schools which means the curriculum is designed to expose and prepare students for the rigor of college-level course work. In addition to attending a college preparatory high school, Ernest also participated in a mentorship program sponsored by a Black organization that sought to expose Black males to the rigor of college through supplementary educational opportunities.

Out-of-School College Prep Resources

In addition to family support, encouragement and guidance from teachers and school agents, dual enrollment and college preparatory experiences; out-of-school college prep, the third
researchable dimension, seeks to highlight from where or whom do Black men receive information to pursue college in the first place—specifically these questions seeks to understand if personal motivation, external programs and/or the combination of the two were instrumental in their motivation to pursue college. For most Black men, out-of-school preparatory resources were not a significant factor, however, the data reveals that personal motivation is a significant factor in a Black male’s decision to seek and pursue a community college education. Black men do credit the influence of teachers, school agents, and family encouragement, but consider their pursuit of college primarily based in their motivation for upward mobility and the prospect of either currently providing for a family or having the ability to do so in the future. Additionally, the older Black males sought out information for themselves. James who is currently attending a City College campus located on the Southside of Chicago recalls, “I used to stay on 79th and Marshfield you know that is like 2-3 miles away so I figured that is the closest school and if I want to get in school I would get in somewhere close.”

When asked what influenced their decision to pursue a community college degree, the responses included; the prospect of a “better life”, “to succeed”, “to find out what I want to be in life”, “money” or to flee the community. As a whole they simply surmised the goal of graduation and the benefits associated with attaining a degree are worth its pursuit.

**College Achievement**

Considering the second point on the education pipeline, college achievement, the data was analyzed to answer the following sub-question: Once enrolled, what personal and/or institutional perceptions does this segment attribute to their ability to persist to graduation? Based on the anti-deficit achievement theme of college achievement, research questions focus on the researchable dimensions; classroom experiences and enriching educational experiences. For
the purpose of this study classroom experiences include, active in-class participation and peer/faculty support in the classroom. Active in-class participation is defined as the level of intentional learning that a Black male exhibits in the classroom and peer/faculty support is defined as the support or guidance given by peers or faculty that positively impact a Black male’s experience while pursuing a community college degree. The interview protocol also directly asks participants how classroom experiences with peers and faculty members has helped them constructively respond to stereotypes. The second researchable dimension for this pipeline point is enriching classroom experiences, which refers to extra-curricular activities, campus resources, and any mentoring a Black male receives that aid him in completing a degree from a community college.

As a precursor to the findings for this portion of the study, the researcher discovered that the overall personal and institutional perception varied among Black men. This is an important factor since one’s personal perception has a significant impact on the how they perceive their experiences. The data revealed that upon entering community college some underestimated the rigor required to successfully complete courses. Samuel reported on his personal perception of his process to complete college, “Personally, I thought, I am here in college, I can do this, I have made it pretty much… I got through high school; this should be a breeze.” According to Samuel, this initial thought process “hindered” him:

In my first semester I had statistics and it was very difficult for me…and then a few of the writing classes I took as well, numerous papers and reading I had to do. It intimidated me a little bit but at the same time it pushed me to do better. It is something about going to college and arriving there you (feel you) have reached like a higher learning ability and you are here, you can do this, you have made it.
Black males also reported feelings of intimidation at the onset of their college career. William, who was returning to school as a nontraditional student, reported a positive perception of the school, but a sense of apprehension regarding his ability to successfully persist through to completion. However, he completed his first semester of classes with all As and ultimately graduated as a high achieving student. While some may be intimated by the prospect of attending community college, some students particularly, younger Black males reported a sense of “being somewhere better” than community college. Manny reported some initial disappointment in himself for not getting into the four-year university of his choice and instead choosing to attend a community college. Some chose community college specifically for financial reasons, according to Ernest, he entered a community college with his long-term financial goals in mind. He talked about his hesitation in attending a four-year university as he knew it would most likely require him take out student loans to fund to his education:

A lot of my high school teachers; they wanted everyone to go to the big four-year universities, but I was worried about the loans. Most people don’t realize that it is not free money, you have to pay it back, so I am not going to go into debt for education that might not be worth it in the first place. I have read stories about people who borrowed 10,000 dollars in loan money and end up paying 40,000 dollars back. I said that is not going to be me. That is a big part of the reason why I ended up going to Truman (City College). When I finished high school, I got into UIC and a couple of other universities, but since I knew that I did not have the money to pay, I ended up at Truman.

This is an important distinction to make, since the perceptions held by Black men as they enter community college has a direct impact on their classroom experiences and their perception of the learning environment, which also has an impact on their pursuit of enriching educational
opportunities. As it pertains to in-classroom experiences, respondents reported having positive peer and faculty interactions. Respondents reported that these interactions were of great assistance in supporting them to persist. Many spoke of the relationship they built with their peers and faculty. Some felt that these relationships, peer and faculty, made them more accountable to the goal of remaining focused on the goal of completing their degree.

Classroom Experiences

In terms of peer and faculty support—in the classroom—assisting in the persistence of Black males; respondents reported a positive correlation between this type of support and their desire and motivation to succeed. James spoke about two of his math professors who had a tremendous impact on his ability to persist. Both professors taught him about economic stability and the longevity that education can provide; “she explained, the higher you get (in education) nine times out of ten the more money you will make and that kind of made sense to me.”

Lincoln spoke about peer and faculty support:

    Peers I would say I met a few; I met a few people that kind of challenged me to be better in order to do what I am trying to do…they would always check up to see, are you doing your assignments or something like that.

He also talked about faculty support. Being from Nigeria, he found it helpful when professors “went the extra mile” to get to know him.

    Some professors went out of the way to make sure that you are OK, they would take the time to learn my name correctly; they would ask me, ‘how do you want me to pronounce your name’, things like that, those little subliminal messages I think affect the outcome. Just asking, Are you doing OK?, How was the test?, was some of the treatment I got from professors.
Manny had similar experiences; he spoke about the motivation he received by meeting like-minded students or seeing his friends complete and move on to a four-year university. He spoke about professors who were caring and actually wanted to see him do well. He valued the smaller class sizes and felt this arrangement allowed his voice to be heard inside and outside the classroom. He specifically spoke about an instructor who kept him accountable and influenced him to grow in the midst of personal hardship:

During my freshman year, literally first four weeks into the semester, I found out that one of my childhood friends got shot; he got shot in the head and it was severe, they did not know if he was going to survive. That Monday in Bio class I found out he passed away and I just remember going through the lecture and just listening and it was like a long lecture and I was just not into the lecture. I was like defeated just thinking about (the fact) that this was someone that I saw like 2-3 weeks ago and now he is gone.

As result of this personal hardship during his freshman year, Manny failed his psychology course. He repeated the class in the summer semester with the same teacher—Manny recalls this teacher’s encouragement even after he previously failed her class.

I ended up having the same professor again and she reminded me that I am a smart kid, I can do it, I just got to put in more effort this time around. Every day after class in the summer she would pull me to the side and talk to me, saying she enjoyed my opinion on certain things, and she sees that I am putting in better effort this time around. That can be motivating just seeing her see the improvement in myself that was good for me and that help me keep a good relationship with her.

When asked about stereotypes in the classroom, the respondents did not report specific instances of overt stereotypes but did express instances of implicit bias. One respondent shared his
experience. Manny reports, “If I was late to class, I felt that the professor thought I was just a kid and I was just trying to get by”. Manny has constructively dealt with instances of implicit bias by “proving them wrong”. He states, “Even if I was late to class I still like to participate, or I would end up writing a really good paper on something”.

Manny also reported a perceived perception of his intellect; being judged based on his appearance, while being cognizant of implicit bias and the negative societal views that Black males must contend with on a daily basis.

They (professors) expect most black kids if they are educated or if they are smart, they would not dress a certain way, but I dress like the everyday black guy you would see… I guess I have to keep it in the back of my head that they already have their thoughts about who I am.

Again, Manny constructively dealt with this perception by “proving them wrong”, he goes on to say, “But when you hear me talk or read what I write I guess they would not expect that out of me.”

While Manny actively and constructively responded to implicit stereotypical acts, some students experienced some of the same feelings, but chose not to acknowledge any such slights. Ernest recalls, that in most of his classes, especially those STEM subjects, he is usually one of very few black males.

Lincoln, who immigrated from Nigeria to United States as a teenager has constructively dealt with implicit bias and stereotypes he has encountered as a Black immigrant in the American community college system. Instead of taking actively ignoring, Lincoln has chosen to take an understanding approach and use these experiences as teachable moments for those he encounters.
A lot of Americans are not very knowledgeable about the world outside their culture. I have had people ask me how do you speak English so well and I am like English is Nigeria’s official language so I was taught English in school. Those stereotypes are attached to being an immigrant, an African; so people who are not familiar with African culture are just trying to understand. I do not take it personally; I see it as an opportunity to make people aware.

**Enriching Educational Experiences**

Enriching educational experiences are those experiences that assist Black men in their pursuit to persist and complete a community college degree. Those experiences include, extra-curricular activities, campus resources, and mentoring. All but one of the respondents reported participating in enriching educational experiences. Black males reported taking part in extra-curricular activities; however, those activities tend to center around peer-to-peer social activities—those activities include gaming, playing ping-pong, and indoor soccer. Black males also report their reliance on campus resources in particular the campus writing lab, the computer lab, the library, TRIO, and academic advising. According to the respondents, academic advising and mentoring are the most impactful enrichment experiences that can assist them in their ability to persist. Lincoln and Ernest participated in a mentor program called One Million Degrees, which assigned them mentors as well as a stipend to financially assist community college students. Lincoln spoke about the dedication his mentor had to his success:

He was very committed. He would have a meeting on campus every Saturday and if he couldn’t make it, he would send someone else in his place. He made sure he was always there and often contacted by phone and text. Helped me critique my essays, gave me ideas on what to talk about and gave me examples of what I could say. He helped me
write a resume, I had never written a resume before. He pretty much revamped my entire resume to point where I was like okay, I probably would not have done this without his help, so that was very inspiring. He helped me with my essays to Illinois State and he took it upon himself to help me transition from city colleges to the four-year institution. He was not getting paid for this, it was strictly voluntary. I really appreciated his selfless attitude.

The data also reveals that although students may not utilize campus resources or mentoring programs; they may find mentoring and academic resources of their own choosing. William, the eldest of the qualitative study population, reports that he would seeking out motivational messages on YouTube as well as utilized Google and other means to assist in academic exploration.

**Post-College Success**

Considering the third and final point on the education pipeline, the data was analyzed to answer the following sub-question: What are your post-college plans? Were these plans instrumental in helping them to persist? Based on the anti-deficit achievement framework, research questions focus on participant experiences as it relates to their plans to either matriculate to a four-year university or enter the workforce after completing a degree a community college degree. This section also probes participants on experiences in community college that may have influenced their post-college decisions. For those respondents who have since graduated:

Lincoln has already entered the four-year university to major in biology and aspires to enter medical school once he completes his bachelor’s degree. Lincoln also reported that his community college experience not only motivated but helped his social skills as well.
I would say the experiences from Truman (City College) definitely made me want to go further. It gave me extra motivation. I say to myself, you already have two years done and have the associates, you are not going to sit around for the next two years, you might as well get the bachelors and then start thinking about the next step in the plan. I think that definitely helped. I also think Truman helped my social life and communicating with people that do not necessarily look like me or may not have the same views. Taking those new found skills to the four-year institution, it was easier talking to people and meeting new people. I think Truman was a great place to go through that process. It definitely helped with the transfer to a four-year college.

William has also completed a community college degree and is currently works as a Chicago police officer. As a result of his community college experiences he aspires to return to school to pursue a masters degree. Since completing his degree, William has made a paradigm shift in his belief system regarding the pursuit of education. When William entered college, his primary motivation was to make money, but as result of attending community college he now has a love of learning and considers himself a life-long learner.

So, the good thing is that I enjoyed it (college), it was fun to me so that is the part that makes me want to go back. I guess it did change from just being about money because I did enjoy it, I was happier.

Samuel completed a degree in Fall semester 2018 and is currently working and has plans to enter Northeastern University to study psychology.

For those on track to graduate in Spring or Summer semester 2019:

Ernest graduated in Summer semester 2019, and his post-college plans include attending an affordable four-year institution and majoring in computer science. He credited his work study
position in student activities and conversations with representatives from the Career Planning and Placement department as the experience that most influenced his post college plans. Manny graduated in Spring 2019, and he plans to enter a four-year institution to major in psychology. After receiving his bachelors and masters degree he would like a doctoral degree and wants to start a counseling practice to serve his neighborhood or another inner-city neighborhood. James also graduated in the Spring semester 2019 and aspires to transfer to a four-year institution while opening his own housing rehabilitation company.

**Qualitative Discussion**

Positioned from an anti-deficit perspective, findings from the qualitative portion of the study were situated along the three education pipeline points of Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework and within each pipeline point, research questions were formed to solicit data on the researchable dimensions of the framework. In addition to Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework, the qualitative portion of this study also utilizes the counter-storytelling component of Ladson-Billings & Tate’s (1995) critical race theory of education. The component of counter-storytelling is especially important since it gives voice, credence, and validity to the experiences that have influenced Black males to successfully complete a community college degree and these experiences are in direct opposition to the predominance of research on undergraduate Black males that highlight underachievement and academic failure for this student population.

In terms of qualitative data analysis, support from stakeholders in the Black male’s milieu is paramount to their ability to conceptualize, start, and complete a community college degree. At every stage in the education pipeline, the influences or the lack of influences they receive can impact a Black male’s academic trajectory. In the pre-college readiness and socialization
portion, this study sought to understand how impactful—familial factors, K-12 forces, and out-of-school college prep resources—are to a Black male’s concept and motivation to consider college as an option. The qualitative data reveals that in general the Black male’s propensity to enter college immediately after high school is highly dependent on the perceived expectations of their family and the K-12 authority figures in their life. Out-of-school college prep resources were not found to have a significant impact on a Black male’s concept or motivation to enter college; however, respondents reported that personal motivation was most important to their motivation to pursue college. While respondents spoke of personal motivation as one of their primary conceptual reasons for considering college, it is this researcher’s belief that the respondents’ concept of personal motivation especially for those who entered college immediately after high school correlates with the motivation and expectation for college that was imposed on them by their family and K-12 authority figures.

College achievement, the second pipeline point, sought to understand how impactful classroom experiences and enriching educational experiences are to a Black male’s persistence once enrolled in a community college. The qualitative data reveals that classroom experiences and enriching educational experiences have a tremendous impact on assisting Black males with in-college achievement. Active in-class participation—a component of classroom experiences—on the part of Black male has a tremendous impact on their motivation and stamina to persist. In terms of faculty support, the data reveals that when Black males make a connection with faculty, they feel a sense of belonging, motivation, and support that help them believe they can succeed. However, what was most, intriguing is that the same can be true when Black males perceive a sense of bias in the classroom setting. While no respondent reported any incidents of overt stereotyping, some respondents did experience instances of implicit bias and in those instances,
many reported a sense of personal determination “to prove them wrong”, which many referred to as tapping into their personal grit to see their way through classroom experiences that were less than supportive. Also, it is important to mention that while no respondent reported experiencing any instances of overt bias, this is likely due the diverse faculty and student body and the inner-city locale of the City Colleges of Chicago. According to the data, enriching educational experiences, the second researchable dimension in the college achievement pipeline point has merit in assisting Black males to persist. While most of the respondents reported utilizing academic resources, peer-to-peer social activities were used primarily by traditional students.

Post-college success, the last point on the education pipeline; this portion of the study found that completing a community college degree provided further inspiration and motivation for Black males to further their education. All the respondents of this study reported a desire to pursue a bachelors degree, even though some of the respondents have transitioned into the workforce. The findings and analysis from both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the this study both support tenants of the Harper’s (2012) anti-deficit achievement framework, in that there are factors that do assist an support academic success for Black males. The next chapter, chapter six, outlines the intersection of the quantitative and qualitative findings and offers recommendations for K-12 stakeholders.
CHAPTER 6

Study Results

As a review, the two previous chapters detailed the quantitative and qualitative findings for this study that seeks to answer the following research question: How do personal and/or institutional experiences influence the persistence of first-time, full-time Black males attending community college? Consistent with the convergent research design, the following pages detail the intersection of both the quantitative and qualitative findings with a side-by-side comparison and data analysis. While both the quantitative and qualitative findings for this study are based on the three education pipeline points the quantitative portion of the study does not consider all the researchable dimensions, specifically out-of-school prep program resources and enriching educational experiences. This oversight is a result of a design flaw, however the qualitative portion of the study directly addresses these research dimensions. As previously stated, this study employs a convergent research design, which allows the counter-storytelling component of the qualitative portion to provide depth and context to support the findings of the quantitative portion. The theoretical framework used for this study is Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework and the quantitative and qualitative data is situated along the three education pipeline points and the researchable dimensions of the framework.

Pre-College Socialization and Readiness

Along the first education pipeline point, pre-college socialization and readiness, the researchable dimensions are familial factors, K-12 school forces, and out-of-school college preparatory resources. The quantitative data reveals that prior to college, in their developmental years, of grammar school and high school a Black male’s thought process and motivation for attending college is most dependent on family support and “other” factors. The qualitative
portion of the study also supports the importance of family and the expectation of a Black male’s family on their trajectory to enter college, but it also addresses the “other” factors noted in the quantitative portion. The qualitative portion reveals that family dynamics play a major role in the level of expectation that Black males place on their ability, motivation, and active pursuit to enter college. In particular, those respondents whose parents migrated to the United States from the continent of Africa spoke about the pursuit of education as being a primary and constant expectation from an early age. The qualitative portion also spoke about the “other” factors and its impact on the non-traditional Black male. For non-traditional Black males, something other than family support or an expectation to pursue college was the direct catalyst to enter college. In many cases, non-traditional Black males enter community college due to life circumstances that propel them to start and complete a community college degree. For some non-traditional Black males, it can be the prospect of providing for their family, or a jolting experience that lead them to the pursuit of upward mobility that community college can provide. This is not to say that all non-traditional Black males do not receive support or an expectation from family members in their formative years, however qualitative research has found that non-traditional Black males enter community college most cases based on life circumstances.

Considering a Black male’s academic exposure before entering college, the quantitative portion of the study reveals that high school teachers, school officials, and school counselors are the largest source of support or motivation impacting their thought process to enter community college after high school. The qualitative portion also revealed that when there is a lack of family encouragement, school officials can be a diligent source of motivation to influence a Black male’s thought process to pursue postsecondary education. Additionally, in the quantitative portion of the study a large number of respondents reported “other” forms of
exposure that influenced their path to community college. While the respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative portions reported that dual enrollment and college preparatory programs were not used to prepare them for college, the qualitative data reveals that early exposure to academic environments that cultivate a Black male’s intellect, through “gifted” programs or college preparatory schools have the biggest impact on the Black male’s self-concept to pursue college as viable option after high school. In terms of out-of-school preparatory resources, the third researchable dimension of Harper’s anti-deficit framework; the quantitative portion did not have a specific question addressing out-of-school preparatory influences, however respondents of the qualitative portion reveal that out-of-school prep programs were not a significant source of preparation for them to enter college. Also included in the qualitative portion of this study in the researchable dimension of out-of-school prep resources, respondents attribute personal motivation and their established long-term life goals as major influences on their thought process during the formative years of grammar school and high school to pursue college. Ultimately, in the formative years of grammar school and high school, family support and an expectation to attend college from family and school officials is the most advantageous pathway to community college for Black males; and even without adequate family support, school officials can have a lasting impact on a Black male’s thought process to pursue entry into community college. Additionally, Black males do credit the influence of teachers, school agents, and family encouragement, but consider their pursuit of college primarily based in their motivation and personal goals, however as stated earlier, in many cases a Black male’s personal motivation to pursue college correlates with the motivation and expectation for college that was imposed on them by their family and K-12 authority figures.
**College Achievement**

Along the second education pipeline point, college achievement, the researchable dimensions are classroom experiences and enriching educational experiences. The quantitative portion of the study seeks to understand how classroom experiences impact a Black male’s ability to persist. In particular, the quantitative portion asks how Black males constructively respond to experiences with in-classroom biases or stereotypes. The data reveals that when faced with challenges, instead of relying on school officials, family, peers, or faculty members, Black males primarily give a counter-argument or rely on their own determination to persevere. However, in the qualitative portion of the study when asked how they constructively dealt with stereotypes, no one reported any instances of overt bias or stereotyping in the classroom, but when further probed, they did express instances of implicit bias from faculty based on being Black males. To combat those slights, Black males do provide counter-arguments, or use the mechanism of “proving them wrong”—which means they exceed expectations by receiving exemplary grading marks on class assignments and ultimately the class. Some Black males, particularly those that migrated to the United States, constructively dealt with implicit stereotypes by using those instances as teachable moments to educate others about cultures other than their own. As a caveat, it is also important to note that while no respondent reported experiencing an instance of overt stereotyping; this is likely due the diverse faculty, student body, and the inner-city locale of the City Colleges of Chicago campuses. However based on the tenets of Ladsons-Billings & Tate’s Critical Race Theory of Education (1995), the American education system is constructed and operates on a legacy of power and privileged which marginalized groups such as Black males have neither, so while there may be no overt biases keenly present in the learning environment, it is most certainly exists.
In terms of classroom experiences and enriching educational experiences, the quantitative portion of the study did not directly address these researchable dimensions, however the qualitative portion found that Black males report a positive correlation between their peers and faculty interactions, extra-curricular activities—predominantly peer-to-peer social activities—and campus resources as important factors in their ability to persist. They also report that traditional and non-traditional forms of mentoring and academic advising, are the most impactful campus resources that assisted them in their ability to persist. While some report the use of mentoring, older Black males in particular, report seeking out non-traditional forms of mentoring which can include YouTube videos and Google searches for inspirational messages or academic support. In summation, Black males successfully completing college achievement is dependent on two factors, their in-college classroom experiences, which include their ability to actively pursue and accept positive faculty and peer interactions and their ability to pursue and take part in enriching education experiences, which include, peer-to-peer social activities, academic advising, and traditional and/or non-traditional forms of mentoring.

**Post-College Success**

Along the third and last education pipeline point, post-college success, the researchable dimensions are enrollment in a four-year university and career entry. The quantitative portion of the study seeks to better understand the post-college plans of Black males attending community college, in addition, to examining the factors Black males believe assisted them the most in their ability to successfully complete. The qualitative portion also seeks to focus on participant experiences as it relates to their plans to either matriculate to a four-year university or enter the workforce, but this section also probes participants on their experiences in community college that may have influenced their post-college decisions. The quantitative data reveals that a large
majority of Black males attending community college intend to matriculate to a four-year institution upon completion of their degree and that less than twenty-five percent intend to enter the workforce. When asked what factors they feel assisted them in their ability to persist, the data reveals that active participation in class, family support, and campus resources provide the most impact for Black males in assisting them to pursue and persist through to completion. In the qualitative portion of the study, the data yields the same outcomes as the quantitative findings, however the qualitative data reveals that non-traditional Black males are more likely to enter the workforce than they are to matriculate to a four-year institution. That is not to say that these Black males do not have intentions to return to school, or to attend university while simultaneously working, many expressed this desire. In terms of experiences that influence successfully outcomes, qualitative data is in line with quantitative data in that, campus resources as well as forging relationships with individuals within these resources has been most impactful to a Black males persistence in community college.

**Discussion of the Broader Implication**

While it is true that community colleges have made the pursuit of education more accessible to minorities and specifically Black males; it is also true that Black males have the lowest success rate among all student groups; and in response, in an effort to understand this trend, the research community has chosen to overwhelmingly focus on the lack of academic achievement for this student group. However, this study asserts that there is valuable knowledge to be gained with an examination of Black males who have been retained and successfully completed a community college degree. Through the use of Harper’s (2010, 2012) anti-deficit achievement framework as the theoretical framework and the counter-storytelling component of Landsons-Billings & Tate’s (1995) Critical Race Theory of Education as conceptual framework,
the purpose of this study is to examine the persistence of first-time, full-time Black males attending community college. Theoretically, the findings of this study work to dismantle the negative one-sided view of undergraduate Black males, which highlights disengagement and underachievement. Utilizing Harper’s anti-deficit achievement framework allowed the researcher to focus on the achievements, perseverance, and academic excellence of Black males. This study supports the notion that along with other student groups, with adequate supports and resources academic success is attainable. Using the counter-storytelling component of Landsons-Billings and Tate’s (1995) Critical Race Theory of Education allowed participants to give voice and credence to their lived experiences, it also gave an in-depth counter-narrative to the plethora of quantitative research that gives a dismal impression of the Black male’s plight for education. This research tells another truth regarding their lived experiences. From a practical perspective the findings from this study gives practitioners a body of evidence from which to gauge and interact with Black males attending community college. This study provides specific evidence that has been instrumental in the Black male’s journey to enter and persist through to completion from a community college. Though, in order to emulate this success and increase success rates among Black males in community college, there must first be better coordination between K-12 settings and the community college system to remove barriers and create pathways for Black males to enter college and once in college, there must be a deliberate effort on the part of college presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff members to create an open, safe environment for Black male students to attain academic success.
Recommendations

Recommendations for K-12 Schools

During the formative years of primary school and high school, the most important component to promoting academic success for Black males is to support and nurture their thought process toward pursuing a college education. It is clear from this research that family support and school officials are most instrumental in creating and providing an expectation for Black males to value the attainment of a degree. In the K-12 setting, nurturing the pursuit of higher education can be achieved in various ways. Early educational experiences, especially in grammar school should speak to a Black male’s confidence and self-concept in relation to his educational pursuits. In the K-12 years, Black male students need numerous opportunities to see and interact with Black male professionals (in all different career fields) so as to see positive examples of men who look like them—it is imperative that young Black boys see examples of Black male success. Additionally, a large portion of the co-curricular initiatives in K-12 settings should be based in nurturing a positive mind set about their personal abilities that align with a career—this can be done by hosting career days that feature and include Black male professionals. This allows young Black boys to interact with Black men who have traveled the path they wish to pursue. In K-12 settings, especially in high school leadership opportunities should be provided for Black males. Also, as educators we must stray from only providing enrichment opportunities to those Black boy who show well academically, we need to focus more on those mid-tier students and academically lower Black male students and support them in seeing themselves as successful. To include family support, parents of Black boys should be included in the exposure process as well; this allows parents to also see the possibilities that
awaits their child. This can be done by including parents in field trips and initiatives that involve exposure to career and college opportunities.

**Recommendations for Community Colleges**

In order to increase the academic success rate for Black males attending community college, it is imperative for college leadership, faculty, and staff members to engage and create a sense of belonging for Black males on campus. This research asserts that in-college success is based on a Black male’s ability to actively engage in the learning process which includes in-class engagement and enriching educational experiences, specifically peer-to-peer social activities. To assist in this effort, community colleges can recruit more Black male instructors along with making an intense push to provide professional development to all faculty, assisting them to understand that Black males in particular require different supports to be academically successful. Also, the community college environment must provide wrap-around services specific to the needs of Black males. Examples of these types of services could include an on-campus department dedicated to the academic and social needs of minority men, more specifically Black males or at least having a staff of Black males in various student services departments (i.e. wellness centers, academic advising, financial aid, etc.) to provide a visual presence and welcoming environment for Black men attending community college. Casual mentoring was also found to be of significant support to Black males attending community college. The relationships built in these types of casual arrangements provide a tremendous amount of support and provide a lasting impact on Black males. Lastly, the community college system as a whole has to understand and recognize that Black males are not monolithic and that there are vast differences in this student group, this would include the differences between traditional and non-traditional Black male students; the educational supports needed for each of
these sub-groups is unique to their personal situation and station in life. Also, there are vast differences in culture and life experiences for American-born black males, referred to as African Americans and those Black males who were born outside of the United States. To truly meet the needs of Black men attending community college we must identify and seek to understand the culture differences within the diaspora of Black males who attend community college.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the findings from this study, there is further research that can be conducted. A large-scale study can be conducted to solicit more quantitative data that will allow for statistical testing. Additional quantitative inquiry can be conducted specific to the researchable dimensions. Also, this study looked at one IPEDS cohort; further testing could open the study to multiple IPED cohorts. In addition, future research could probe deeper into the in-college experience, particularly with peer-to-peer social activities. Traditional research on persistence states that social integration does not impact persistence and in some studies social integration has been shown to have a negative impact, however this study reveals that for Black males, peer-to-peer social engagement has a positive influence on their persistence. In addition to learning about their pre-college and in-college experiences, the study could probe deeper into the post-college experiences. Further testing could also be done on African-American males and Black males born outside the United States to understand what if any differences impact their pursuit to enter and persist through community college to completion based on their cultural background.
Conclusion

Through an anti-deficit examination of Black male persistence, this study sought to bring about a paradigm shift to the study of Black male undergraduates, by providing an appropriate theoretical framework, Harper’s Anti-deficit Achievement framework (2010, 2012) and by providing a counter-narrative to the plethora of one-sided deficit-based research through the use of the counter-storytelling tenant of Landson-Billings & Tate’s (1995) Critical Race Theory of Education. Utilizing this tenant allowed the research participants to express their lived experienced regarding how they navigated their path to academic completion. This study was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

1. How do personal and/or institutional experiences impact the persistence of first-time, full time Black male students attending community college?
   a. What precollege experiences contributed to this segment’s ability to start and persist through community college?
   b. Once enrolled, what personal and/or institutional perceptions does this segment attribute to their ability to persist to graduation?
   c. What are the post-college plans for this segment and were these plans instrumental in helping them to persist?

This study identified factors that contributed to the academic success of Black males in community college—those factors were positioned along the three education pipeline points of Harper’s Anti-deficit Achievement Framework and as result of this research, it my hope that community college professionals begin to realize that academic success for Black males is achievable.
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PERSISTENCE


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APPENDIX A

Quantitative Questions

Age: _________

Marital Status: Single_____ Divorced _____ Widowed________

1. Are you currently employed? Yes_____ No_____
   a. Part-time_____ b. Full-time ______

2. Do you have dependents? Yes____ No_____

3. Number of dependents __________

4. Are you the first person in your family to attend college? Yes_____ No_____

5. Prior to starting community college, which was more impactful in your ability to start
   and complete your degree or certificate?
   b. Family Support
   c. High school Counselor
   d. College prep-program(s)
   e. Religious/spiritual guidance
   f. Other: _________________________________
6. Prior to attending community college, who and/or which school agent was most responsible for how you thought about your ability to pursue college.
   g. High school teachers or official
   h. School Counselors
   i. Dual enrollment program
   j. College-prep program (TRIO, Gear Up, Upward Bound etc.)
   k. Other (text box)

7. Considering your in-college classroom experiences how did you constructively respond to any instances of bias of stereotypes?
   l. Contacted a school official
   m. Consulted peers and or family
   n. Voiced a counter-argument
   o. Relied on personal grit and perseverance
   p. Consulted a pastor or church official

8. What are your post-college plans?
   q. Enter the workforce
   r. Enter a four-year university
   s. Continue your education at the City Colleges of Chicago

9. While in community college, what experiences do you feel assisted you in your ability to be successful? Pick a maximum of 3.
   t. Active participation in class
u. Experiences with peers
v. Extra-curricular activities (Student Government or clubs)
w. Experiences with faculty members
x. Campus resources (Tutoring, Advising, TRIO or Wellness Center)
y. Mentorship

Thank you for your participation. If you would be interested in conducting a one-on-one interview to provide more feedback on this topic, please contact, Donna K. Williams at dwilliams19@student.govst.edu or by phone at 773-392-0029. Please note: your participation in this second phase of research is also voluntary.
### Table 3: Interview Protocol based on Education Pipeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-deficit Achievement Theme</th>
<th>Probing Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-College Socialization &amp; Readiness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Familial Factors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. What pre-college experiences contributed to this segment’s ability to start and persist through community college?</td>
<td>1. How has your family supported you throughout your educational journey?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Was there any expectation from your parents or other family members for you to attend college?</td>
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<td>3. Were you treated or encouraged differently from other siblings, specifically your sister(s)?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 School Forces</strong></td>
<td>4. Tell me about your educational background. Did you find support and/or encouragement to pursue a college education from teachers or other school agents while in primary or high school?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. In high school, did you participate in any dual enrollment or college prep programs, such as Upward Bound?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-School College Prep Resources</strong></td>
<td>6. What motivated you to pursue a college education in the first place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Where or from whom did you get your information for college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Achievement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Classroom Experiences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Once Enrolled, what personal and/or institutional perceptions does this segment attribute their ability to persist to graduation?</td>
<td>8. Describe any experiences such as, active participation or peer/faculty support in the classroom that assisted you in being successful?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Considering your classroom experiences with peers and faculty members, how did you constructively respond to stereotypes you encountered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enriching Educational Experiences</strong></td>
<td>10. Were you involved in extra-curriculum activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. What campus resources or programs have you utilized throughout your community college career?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Did you have a formal or informal mentor while attending CCC?</td>
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<td><strong>Post-College Success</strong></td>
<td><strong>Four-year University Enrollment or Career Entry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What are the post-college plans for this segment and were these plans instrumental in helping them to persist?</td>
<td>13. What are your post-college plans; 4yr university or workforce?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14. What experiences in community college have influenced your post-college decision?</td>
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APPENDIX C

Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Participant Pseudonym _________________________________________

1. Age___________

2. Marital Status:

Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widower _____

3. Number of dependent children in the home ______

4. Employment Status:

Employed part time _____
Fulltime______
Unemployed_______

5. Are you the first person in your family to attend college? Yes_____ No_____ 

6. Enrollment Status:

Graduate __________ Summer 2019 ________

Attended School Part-time ______
Attended School Fulltime_______
Both ________
Did you take off any semesters  yes or  no  How many semesters: __________

Type of Degree Earned ______________________________

Type of Certificate Earned ______________________________

Graduation Campus ______________________________________

7. Social Engagement:

Campus Club
Membership______________________________________________

Other Campus Social Involvement___________________________________
APPENDIX D

Default Report

African American Males Survey

March 27th 2019, 3:34 pm CDT

Q1 - CONSENT FORM Title of the Study: An anti-deficit Approa

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<td>CONSENT FORM Title of the Study: An anti-deficit Approa</td>
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<td>86.21%</td>
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<td>No</td>
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Q2 - What is your current age?

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Q3 - What is your marital status?

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<td>1</td>
<td>What is your marital status?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
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Total 100% 21
Q4 - Are you currently employed?

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<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Are you currently employed?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Q5 - What is the status of your employment?

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<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is the status of your employment?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>9</td>
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<table>
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<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>9</td>
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Q6 - Do you have dependents?

---

**PERSISTENCE**

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<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you have dependents? - Selected Choice</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes, (Number of dependents):</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>33.33%</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>16.67%</td>
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Q7 - Prior to starting community college, which was more impactful in your ability to start and complete your degree or certificate?

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<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prior to starting community college, which was more impactful in your ability to start and complete your degree or certificate? - Selected Choice</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a. Family Support</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>b. High school Counselor</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a. Family Support</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>b. High school Counselor</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>c. College prep-program(s)</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>d. Religious/spiritual guidance</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>e. Other:</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Q8 - Prior to attending community college, who and/or which school agent was most responsible for how you thought about your ability to pursue college.

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<td>Prior to attending community college, who and/or which school agent was most responsible for how you thought about your ability to pursue college. - Selected Choice</td>
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<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2.64</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a. High school teachers or official</td>
<td>52.63%</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>b. School Counselors</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>c. Dual enrollment program</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>d. College-prep program (TRIO, Gear up, Upward Bound, etc.)</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
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Q9 - Considering your in-college classroom experiences how did you constructively respond to any instances of bias of stereotypes?

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<th>Field</th>
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<th>Maximum</th>
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<th>Std Deviation</th>
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<td>Considering your in-college classroom experiences how did you constructively respond to any instances of bias of stereotypes?</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.22</td>
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<td>a. Contacted a school official</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>b. Consulted peers and or family</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Count</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>c. Voice a counter-argument</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>d. Relied on personal grit and perseverance</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>e. Consulted a pastor or church official</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10 - What are your post-college plans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What are your post-college plans?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a. Enter the work-force</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>b. Enter a four-year university</td>
<td>73.68%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>c. Continue your education at the City Colleges of Chicago</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>d. Non of the above</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11 - As you approach graduation from community college, what experiences do you feel assisted you in your ability to be successful? Pick a maximum of 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>a. Family Support</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>b. Religious/spiritual guidance</td>
<td>6.41%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>c. Active participation in class</td>
<td>20.51%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>d. Experiences with peers</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>e. Extra-curricular activities (Student Government or clubs)</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>f. Experiences with faculty members</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>g. Campus resources (Tutoring, Advising or Wellness Center)</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>h. Mentorship</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q14 - Would you be interested in providing additional feedback in the form of a one-on-one interview? By selecting yes, you will be entered for a chance to win a $10 Amazon gift card.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Would you be interested in providing additional feedback in the form of a one-on-one interview? By selecting yes, you will be entered for a chance to win a $10 Amazon gift card.</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q15 - Thank you for your participation in a one-on-one interview! Please provide your name, email address, phone number and student ID number below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Email:</th>
<th>Phone Number:</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM (Quantitative)

Title of the Study: An anti-deficit Approach to the Study of Persistence: Factors influencing Persistence among African American Males attending Community College

Principle Investigator: Donna K. Williams, a doctoral student in the Department of Education at Governors State University.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to examine the lived experiences of African American males who are on track to graduate from a community college. Information from this study will be used to better understand the Black male’s decision making process in choosing to academically persist when pursing a community college degree or certificate.

What you will be asked to do: Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to submit to a 5 to 10-minute online survey. You can choose to skip any question you don't want to answer. All information you provide will be kept private.

Benefits and Risks: The researcher does not foresee any significant risks beyond everyday life to anyone participating in the study. Additionally, participants will not experience immediate benefits from this study; however, participation in this research study may help other African American males attending community college. Lastly, no promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate in this study.
Statement of Confidentiality: Protecting your privacy is very important aspect of the research process. To minimize any risk to your privacy, all research data is presented in aggregate format and survey data will be stored on a secure CCC server. Additionally, all survey data will be destroyed after the researcher’s dissertation defense has been completed.

The City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study’s data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

Note: in some situations, it may be necessary for an investigator to break confidentiality. If a researcher has reason to suspect that a person poses a threat of harm to others or him/herself, the researcher is required by Illinois State law to notify the appropriate authorities. If applicable to this study, the conditions under which the investigator must break confidentiality must be described.

Compensation: Compensation will not be offered to participants. Participation is strictly voluntary.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study in completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions asked.

Right to Withdraw: When participating in the study, if you are uncomfortable, you have the right to discontinue your participation at any time, without penalty.
It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

If you should have any questions now or in the future about this study, you may contact the research investigator, Donna K. Williams at [redacted] or at [redacted]. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study’s conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact Dr. Marlon Cummings, Assistant Professor, Director of Interdisciplinary Leadership Doctorate Program at [redacted] or [redacted].

By clicking the link below you indicate that you are 18 years of age or older and have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. You also acknowledge that you understand the study described above and have had your questions answered.
APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM (Qualitative)

Title of the Study: An anti-deficit Approach to the Study of Persistence: Factors influencing Persistence among African American Males attending Community College

Principle Investigator: Donna K. Williams, a doctoral student in the Department of Education at Governors State University.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to examine the lived experiences of African American males who are on track to graduate from a community college. Information from this study will be used to better understand the Black male’s decision making process in choosing to academically persist when pursuing a community college degree or certificate.

What you will be asked to do: Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to submit to a 30 to 45-minute face-to-face interview. The research will take place in a pre-arranged interview room on the CCC campus of my choice, which is _____________. During the interview process, you can choose to skip any question you don't want to answer. All information you provide will be kept private.

Benefits and Risks: The researcher does not foresee any significant risks beyond everyday life to anyone participating in the study. Additionally, participants will not experience immediate benefits from this study; however, participation in this research study may help other African
American males attending community college. Lastly, no promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate in this study.

Statement of Confidentiality: Protecting your privacy is very important aspect of the research process. To minimize any risk to your privacy, all research data is presented in aggregate format and survey data will be stored on a secure CCC server. Additionally, all survey data will be destroyed after the researcher’s dissertation defense has been completed.

The City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study’s data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

Note: in some situations, it may be necessary for an investigator to break confidentiality. If a researcher has reason to suspect that a person poses a threat of harm to others or him/herself, the researcher is required by Illinois State law to notify the appropriate authorities. If applicable to this study, the conditions under which the investigator must break confidentiality must be described.

Compensation: Compensation will not be offered to participants. Participation is strictly voluntary.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study in completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions asked.
Right to Withdraw: When participating in the study, if you are uncomfortable, you have the right to discontinue your participation at any time, without penalty.

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

If you should have any questions now or in the future about this study, you may contact the research investigator, Donna K. Williams at [redacted] or at [redacted]

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study’s conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact Dr. Marlon Cummings, Assistant Professor, Director of Interdisciplinary Leadership Doctorate Program at [redacted] or [redacted]

My signature below indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I understand the study described above and have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

I, ________________________________ give consent to participate in this study.

________________________________________
Participant Signature

________________________________________
Participant Printed Name
Please sign both copies of this form. You will receive one copy of this form for your records.
Interview Overview and Introduction (Qualitative)

1. Introduce facilitator: Hello, my name is Donna Williams. I am a College Advisor at Malcolm X College and I am also a Doctoral Student at Governors State University pursuing a degree in educational leadership.

2. Explain purpose of the interview: The purpose of our interview today is to further discuss the factors that influenced your decision to start, pursue, and complete a community college degree.

3. Explain desired outcomes and how gathered information will be used: This research is approached from an anti-deficit perspective, which means I am seeking to learn more about the academic success and achievement of Black males, as opposed to the overwhelming negative output of research on this student group. As a result, the survey and interview data will be compiled to give a well-rounded assessment of the pre-college, in-college and post-college influences that have helped you to succeed. I am hoping this research will aid in dismantling the negative one-sided view of undergraduate Black males by examining those, like yourself that have been successfully retained by the City Colleges of Chicago.

4. Explain consent form and request signatures: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. For this reason, you will be asked to sign a form giving consent for your participation in this research. Also, if you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the question(s) asked.

5. Audio taping/videotaping/note-taking: Our interview today, will be captured by audio recording for the purposes of transcribing data to code and analyze. None of your personal information will be used, you will be assigned a pseudonym to conceal your identity. Also, all data will be presented in aggregate form as an additional measure of confidentiality. Because the information you provide today will be transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review the transcripts and make any corrections or adjustments before this information is presented.

6. Describe Researchers role: My role as facilitator is to ask questions and allow you the opportunity to freely express your thoughts.

7. Describe participants’ role: Your role is express your thoughts as it pertains to each question. There are no right or wrong answers. If you need to take a break or if a question is not understandable, I can repeat the question or try to better explain.

8. Logistics:
   a. 30-60 minutes maximum
b. Arrangements for water and restroom break
c. Other?

10. Questions: Now, are there any questions before we get started?
**APPENDIX H**

Most influential Factors to Black Male Persistence Based on Education Pipeline Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Pipeline Point</th>
<th>Factors leading to Persistence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-College Socialization and Readiness</td>
<td>Family Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Factors*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School Counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School Teacher or Official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Achievement</td>
<td>Reliance on personal grit or perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voicing counter arguments in the face of bias or stereotypes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Participation in Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiences with faculty members and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utilizing Campus Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post College Plans</td>
<td>Entering four-year Universities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Those items deemed “other”, are further discussed in the qualitative analysis.*