Bibliography of Research on African-American Male Achievement in Higher Education

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Following is a bibliography of research that was has been culled, which speaks to the achievement of African-American males within higher education (although a few studies may deal with high school). Each of the citations are accompanied by an abstract composed by the author(s) of the study. The primary goal of this bibliography is to assist the efforts of the Tennessee Board of Regents in creating high impact practices for African-American males. Such practices would be utilized by educators to help recruit, retain, and successfully graduate African-American male students.


ABSTRACT: Using Illinois as an illustrative case study, this article examines enrollment and degree completion patterns among African American and Latino males attending community colleges in the state. Findings suggest disparate trends in enrollment and credential completion when compared to the overall population and White male peers. Authors suggest potential factors influencing this observation and offer recommendations for key stakeholders invested in the success of this traditionally underserved population.


ABSTRACT: The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how African-American males feel about their schooling experiences. This inquiry involved 18 participants located in eastern North Carolina. Many African-American males lack early learning experiences to adequately prepare for a positive schooling experience. The findings from this study might prove helpful for working with African American males in an educational setting.


ABSTRACT: Research indicates an alarming trend of African-American male students failing to graduate once enrolled in colleges and universities (National Center for Education Statistics 2011). In response to this problem, various universities have implemented academic programs to provide support and retention for these students. This study examines a retention program with Freshmen African-American male students in a large metropolitan university. Specifically, this article seeks to highlight the impact of retention programs on African-American male students successfully completing their first year of college. Results from a mixed method design suggest that retention programs have a positive impact on African-American male academics, with specificity to increased grade point averages.

**ABSTRACT:** African-American males face major challenges in retention and graduation from institutions of higher education. The 6-year graduation rate for African-American males at 4-year public institutions and private nonprofit colleges is less than 40%. This figure suggests that persistence toward degree attainment is a problem. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether selected precollege- and college-level variables have a relationship to retention and graduation for African-American males. Gateway University, a historically black college and university, was the site of the investigation. Three research questions were posed: (a) What precollege variables best predict retention and graduation for African-American males? (b) What college-level variables best predict retention and graduation for African-American males? and (c) What combination of precollege- and college-level variables best predict retention and graduation for African-American males? Five-hundred and sixty-two African-American males, entering freshmen for the 2005–2006 academic year, comprised the sample. Inferential analyses, including bivariate relationships, cross-tabulations, chi-square and logistic regression, were performed to determine relationships between the independent (predictor) and dependent (criterion) variables. The results reveal that (a) students with higher high-school grade point averages (GPAs) were more likely to be retained and graduate than those with lower GPAs, (b) students with higher first semester GPAs were more likely to be retained and to graduate than those with lower first semester GPAs, (c) residents of the state were most likely to be retained than nonresidents, and (d) residents of the state and students with higher first semester GPAs were more likely to be retained and graduate than those with lower first semester GPAs.


**ABSTRACT:** This case study investigation of three Academically Gifted African-American male high school seniors in a predominantly African-American urban high school examines the interplay between their ethnic and academic identity. Using an embedded micro-ethnographic approach, we explore the extent to which these students value educational attainment, the extent to which they connect with their ethnicity, and those “significant others” who inhibit or dissuade the development of their ethnic and/or academic identity. Consistent with the conclusions of more recent educational literature, findings indicate participants in this investigation value the purpose and intent of schooling and the mobility associated with it, express “‘Blackness’ is an essential component of their academic achievement and overall self-concept, and credit people within their immediate social network for opening their eyes to social injustices within the world at an early age. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

ABSTRACT: This quantitative study applied Marx’s (2006) extended model of student integration to a sample of 393 student athletes within the California community college system to examine the extent to which academic and social integration, institutional commitment, and selected demographic variables were predictive of commitment to graduation. Four independent variables for the African American male student athlete sample yielded strong predictors of commitment to graduation and explained 32% of the variation in commitment to graduation. The most significant predictor, institutional fit, explained 25% of the variation in commitment to graduation scores. Other significant predictors included athletic institutional commitment, semesters enrolled, and investment poise. The study also showed that African American male student athletes scored higher than non-African American male student athletes in athlete academic integration, combined social integration, and combined institutional commitment. The study concludes with a discussion of the findings, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for further research.


ABSTRACT: The purpose of this report is to provide an anti-deficit view of Black male college achievement. Therefore, little attention will be devoted to reminding readers of the extent to which Black men are disengaged and underrepresented among college students and degree earners. This report is the largest-ever qualitative research study on Black undergraduate men. The National Black Male College Achievement Study is based on 219 students who have been successful in an array of postsecondary educational settings.


ABSTRACT: This study examined to what extent differences exist in pre-college characteristics and academic performance between Black male student-athletes and their student-athlete peers. Data provided by the Florida Department of Education’s PK-20 Education Data Warehouse (EDW) were analyzed as a function of group membership (gender and race), using descriptive analysis, cross-tabulations, and a one-way ANOVA. The sample included 513 cases, with White females comprising 36.3% of the sample, White males 24.3%, Black females 15.5%, and Black males 14.3%. Student-athletes’ academic performance was operationalized using four continuous variables (grade point average [GPA], course credit hours enrolled, course credit hours earned, and credit hours enrolled/earned ratio) and one dichotomous variable (degree completion). Findings suggest that Black males earned 72% of the credit hours they attempted, which was less than all other examined groups. Within Black males, differences between socio-economic groups were also found. Individuals identified as high socio-economic status (SES) earned approximately 82% of credit hours enrolled, compared with those identified as low SES, which earned 67% of credit hours attempted. Between-group differences were also found when examining college readiness and percentage of degrees completed. This study contributes to the extant literature on student-athletes at community and 2-year colleges by providing insight into
the potential impact individual characteristics have on academic performance outcomes for Black male student-athletes. The author also provides thoughtful consideration concerning how institutions and policy changes can positively affect these outcomes.


**ABSTRACT:** The educational outcomes of African American male students have been explored by several scholars. What has been lacking, however, is an examination of the role of spirituality and religion as it pertains to the educational experiences of African American male students, especially those who have been successful along the mathematics continuum. In this article, the author explores the influences of spirituality and religion on the educational outcomes of four academically successful African American male graduate students in mathematics and mathematics education. Additionally, the author presents a critical analysis of his own experiences as an African American scholar with spiritual underpinnings. Recommendations and implications are posited concerning a more nuanced approach to intertwining the role of spirituality and religion and academic success.


**ABSTRACT:** This study investigated the risk and protective factors of 11 high achieving African-American males attending 4 urban charter high schools in a Midwestern city to determine what factors account for their resilience and success in mathematics courses, and in high school more generally. This research was guided by a Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, which assisted in extrapolating how these young Black males make sense of their experiences despite the many challenges they face growing up in urban Black America. Results indicate that although students were under multiple forms of academic and physical threat within and beyond school walls, there was a keen presence of academic agency and an ability to manage potentially threatening situations to cleverly protect themselves from complex systems of risk.


**ABSTRACT:** Qualitative interviews were employed to assess the effectiveness of a leadership program geared toward African-American male personal and professional development, and to examine the relationship between program participation and connectedness. Elements of both social engagement (mentoring and being mentored, peer-to-peer relationships, and networking) and student/professional development (pre-entry characteristics, self-awareness and reflection, legacy planning and succession, and leadership skills) were found to be important to personal and professional development.

**ABSTRACT:** Although African-Americans continue to demonstrate a desire for education, Black male enrollment and completion rates in higher education are dismal when compared to other ethnic groups. Researchers and scholars have noted various theories and philosophies responsible for the academic disengagement of African-American men in higher education. This article provides a new contextual lens for understanding the academic disengagement of Black men using a tenet of critical theory as a method to explain the African-American male achievement disparity. Additionally, this research offers employable strategies and activities that may encourage Black male achievement.


**ABSTRACT:** Previous college impact studies attempt to estimate the impact of college on African American collegians as a whole. That is, most researchers study Black students as if they represent a monolithic group with similar inputs, experiences, and outcomes. Yet, a growing body of research provides compelling evidence that there are significant within group differences. Using three principles of good practices in undergraduate education defined by Chickering and Gamson (AAHE Bulletin 39:3–7,), this study examined differences in African American males’ (N = 149) engagement by institutional type. A single significant predictor was found; Black men attending master’s institutions have a significant advantage over their counterparts at liberal arts colleges with respect to cooperation among students, controlling for an array of confounding factors. This study provides empirical support for the use of good practices in undergraduate education, particularly among African American men, and has important implications for future practice, policy, and research.


**ABSTRACT:** This study focused on the impact of college environments on the spiritual development of African-American students. Using the Armstrong Measure of Spirituality (AMOS) survey administered to 125 African-American college students, the study sought to ascertain whether or not there were differences in spirituality as reported by African-American students attending a historically Black college and African-American students attending a predominantly White institution. Gender differences and differences based on students’ classifications were also examined. The results revealed that African-Americans attending a predominantly White institution reported higher levels of spirituality than African-Americans attending a historically Black college. The results also showed significant differences among the students on 2 of the AMOS subscales-spiritual beliefs and spiritual actions—in relation to gender and grade classification. Specifically, African-American males attending the historically Black college scored significantly lower on the spiritual beliefs variable than the entire sample of...
females and males attending the predominantly White institution. Additionally, African-American males in lower divisions scored significantly less on spiritual beliefs than African-American males in upper divisions and females. Plausible explanations for these differences include a greater need among African-Americans attending predominantly White institutions (a minority status) to seek and rely on spirituality for support and as a coping mechanism, and the fact that spirituality is a developmental construct which may be a reason that helps to explain the differences between African-American males in lower and upper divisions.


ABSTRACT: How can African-American community college students aspiring to four-year degrees translate aspiration into attainment? This qualitative study explored experiences of 18 African-American community college students who transferred to a research university and earned baccalaureate degrees. An integration of Padilla's (1999) model of minority student success and a component of Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model framed this investigation. Selected findings suggest students practiced habits that supported achievement and utilized aspirational capital to earn four-year degrees. Students offered four key pieces of advice to others following their path: stay focused, get connected, be prepared, and do your best.


ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to investigate Black male collegians’ reported reasons for leaving college. This study examined students in public 2-year colleges, comparing Black male collegians with all other male collegians. Data examined were derived from the first two waves (2003-2004 and 2005-2006) of the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Data were analyzed using logistic regression. Findings from descriptive data indicated that Blacks and non-Blacks had few similarities in the area they reported as their reasons for leaving. Logistic regression analyses revealed little differences in patterns across the two waves in leaving college for academic problems. However, they illustrated that Black males were less likely to leave college for program dissatisfaction, financial reasons, military reasons, or scheduling issues. In contrast, patterns indicated that Black males were more likely to leave for other reasons not included in the response categories. Two variables examined in this study illustrated differences across the waves. In the first wave, the odds of Black male departure due to family responsibilities were greater for Black males, while they were lower in the second wave. This suggested that Black men who will leave college due to family responsibilities will do so early on. Furthermore, the odds of Black male departure were lower for other reasons in the first wave and greater in the second wave.


ABSTRACT: This study examined background characteristics among Black males in public two-year and four-year institutions. This study sought to uncover whether significant differences
existent among this sub-group by institutional type. Data were derived from 533 Black male students participating in the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. The analysis was conducted using two stages of logit analysis. In the first stage, individual logistic regressions were conducted with eighteen variables. In the second stage, significant variables from the first stage were analyzed using appropriate controls. Findings from this study illustrated that, Black males at two-year colleges are markedly different from those attending four-year institutions. Even when statistical controls were set in place, findings illustrated that while Black males share the same racial/ethnic and gender identity, there are numerous distinctions between institutional types on background variables. Implications for future research are delineated.


**ABSTRACT:** Guided by Bean and Eaton's (2011) psychological model of college student retention, this study sought to determine whether math and English self-efficacy had an effect on several integration measures for Black male students in the community college. Specifically, this study focused on the integration experiences of these men during their first-year of college. Data employed in this study were derived from the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2006/2012 and analyzed using multinomial logistic regression. Results indicated that math self-efficacy was significantly predictive of several academic integration measures, including talking with faculty about academic matters, meeting with advisors, and using the internet to access library resources. Interestingly, English efficacy had little to no effect on academic integration in most of the models.


**ABSTRACT:** Similar to 4-year institutions, community colleges are struggling to find ways to increase the success rates of racial and ethnic minority students in general and Black males specifically. According to data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS), compared to their male counterparts, Black males have the lowest retention and graduation rates among their peers. Given this, using national data from BPS, this article has investigated the personal goals of Black males in community colleges and provided context for how community college officials can use these goals to facilitate Black male academic and psychosocial development. Indeed, this article is noteworthy as limited research has focused on personal goals for Black males in community college. The article concludes with implications for practice and future research.