Academic Resilience, Student Engagement, and Academic Achievement Among Black Male Undergraduates at Predominantly White Institutions

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ACADEMIC RESILIENCE, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG BLACK MALE UNDERGRADUATES AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

by

Henry C. McCain III

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Western Michigan University December 2021

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The proportion of Black men enrolled in college is representative of the Black male population in the U.S. (Toldson, 2019). However, an investigation of the 2010 college entry cohort of Black men showed that only 34% graduate within six years (National Center for Education Statistics; NCES, 2019). The disparity in Black male graduation rate is clearer when compared to other races such as White men (61%), Hispanic men (50%), and Asian men (70%) (NCES, 2019). Within-group disparities also exist in that Black women graduate at a rate of 44% (NCES, 2019). Much of the literature on Black undergraduates has been conducted at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and has shown a pattern of Black male underachievement (Harper, 2015). These studies examined deficit-informed factors such as hostile racial climate (Carter, 2008; Flowers, 2004), racism (Harper, 2007, 2015; Singer, 2005), microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007), and lack of institutional support (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015) to understand institutional or personal impediments to Black male graduation.

Although deficit studies discussed institutional policies and demographic variables that combine to decrease Black male graduation rates, such research also endorses the perception that Black men cannot succeed in college. However, some recent literature has utilized an anti-deficit framework which elucidates the positive attributes of Black men who have graduated despite the
institutional inequities (Bridges 2010; Harper, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008; Williamson, 2010). Much remains to be known about Black male students who succeed through these challenges. With that goal in mind, this study will examine the factors of resilience and engagement that help Black men attain academic success in college.

The present study utilized quantitative analyses to explore hypotheses concerning the relationship among demographic variables, academic resilience, student engagement, and academic achievement. Participants were recruited from a Midwestern PWI. This researcher engaged in a variety of techniques to obtain the sample which included email list-servs, registered student organizations, flyers, and snowball sampling. The measures used included a demographic instrument, the Student Engagement Scale (SES; Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015), and the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30; Cassidy, 2016). Data were collected online using Qualtrics survey software. A total of 124 Black men from a Midwestern PWI agreed to complete surveys. Primary analyses were bi-variate correlation and logistic regression.

In this study, academic resilience and student engagement were statistically significant predictors of academic achievement. Student engagement was found to be a predictor of academic achievement. Academic resilience was not a better predictor of achievement when compared to student engagement.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Contrary to popular belief, Black men are not underrepresented in universities. In fact, 12.7 million Black males (age 18 and over) comprise 5.5% of the population, as well as 5.5% of all college students (Toldson, 2019). Among Black men, 33% are enrolled at either a public or private four-year institution (NCES, 2020a). Although college enrollment rates for Black men are proportional to Black male representation in the adult United States (U.S.) population, college degree attainment rates fall far short of these numbers (Toldson, 2019). More than two-thirds of all African American males who begin college never complete their degree, and statistics like these and a plethora of other unfavorable facts about Black males are the typical story (Harper, 2007). The attrition rates are even higher for Black males attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) due to the lack of institutional resources and support for Black males (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2012). For example, Black men are underrepresented in measures of college degree attainment, as only 16% of Black males enrolled in college complete their degree (Toldson, 2012). For Black males attending PWIs, the number of those who fail to persist is even higher (Harper, 2010).

The rising rates of Black men attending PWIs, compared with the low rates of degree attainment, are one of the most pressing and complex issues in American higher education (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, 2012). Earlier literature has investigated common issues such as negative relationships between faculty and peers with Black males (Davis, 1994), routinely encountering racist stereotypes, racial microaggressions on campus (Singer, 2005; Sue et al., 2007), and race-
related-stress in color-blind college environments (Coleman et al., 2013). Although informative, such literature captures a deficit-informed framework that perpetuates stereotypes that have been proven to negatively impact the academic performance of Black male students, as well as institutional programming and policy strategies (Kim & Hargrove, 2013). However, there are a portion of Black males who have succeeded despite the circumstances. Some recent scholarship has departed from a deficit-informed orientation by focusing on successful Black male achievers at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), demonstrating that successful Black collegians serve as agents, displaying strong self-efficacy and engagement (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2012; Kim & Hargrove, 2013; Moore et al., 2003; Williamson, 2010).

Some recent scholarship has departed from a deficit model by focusing on successful Black male achievers at PWIs, demonstrating that successful Black collegians serve as agents, displaying strong self-efficacy and engagement (Kim & Hargrove, 2013). They depend on peers, family members, and mentors along their educational journey to success (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2007, 2009, 2012). Their success can also be attributed to their ability to overcome the negative factors to attain good grades and persist regardless of the difficulties experienced within the context of PWIs. Contrary to the discourse that highlights the failure of Black male students to achieve in higher education, a recurring theme in the literature is the resiliency of Black college males (Kim & Hargrove, 2013).

Resilience has been defined as the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Rutter, 1987). Morales and Trotman (2004) expanded the notion of resilience to include academic resilience. Academic resilience refers to educational achievement outcome anomalies that occur after an individual has been
exposed to statistical risk factors. Though academic resilience as a field of study has recently become more prominent in the social science literature, this focus on positive outcomes remains minuscule compared to all of the work still being done on student failure (Morales & Trotman, 2011). Academic resilience can help to explain how some Black men can achieve and have success in post-secondary institutions, regardless of the racial demographics. Despite the statistics discussed earlier, the fact remains that there are Black male students who learn to navigate the environment of PWIs. Resiliency theory demonstrates that by learning how Black males can succeed, PWIs can begin to better serve those Black males with the potential to succeed.

As noted, PWIs are unprepared to meet the needs of an increasingly higher number of Black males entering their campuses. This is partly because PWIs lack the knowledge and institutional structure that identifies issues faced by the Black student population in college. PWIs need to recognize the root of Black students’ challenges to be able to make a plan for retention (Tinto, 1993). Colleges have the responsibility in motivating students, but they must understand both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate them to remain in college (Petty, 2014). One of the focal areas that has been found in studies of retention of college students has been student engagement. Facilitating student engagement initiatives, by providing Black male students with opportunities to participate in college campus activities, can lead to motivation and creates a positive impact (Petty, 2014).

Student engagement serves a primary focus in the present study. Research by Astin (1993) has shown that student engagement is an integral part of students’ academic success in college. Astin (1993) asserts that students must be actively engaged and involved in the learning environment and campus culture to have positive outcomes. Some universities are not as
invested in the involvement and engagement of their Black students, which in turn lead to high dropout rates for Black males in particular (Harper, 2004). Therefore, for Black males attending PWIs, it is critical that they find ways to become engaged in the campus community to achieve academic success and combat the obstacles such as racism and feelings of marginalization.

Allen (1992) found that students who take more time to engage in campus activities and engage with faculty, and had good grades in high school, usually accomplished a higher level of academic achievement in college as measured by GPA. Similarly, Harper (2009) found that the 143 Black males in his study were adamant about seeking opportunities to engage with professors and within the campus community in pursuit of academic achievement as measured by GPA. Each of these men earned a GPA of 3.0 or above. Academic achievement has been found to be one of the best indicators of success in college on the road to graduation. As such, the academic achievement of Black men attending PWIs will add a contribution to their eventual graduation and success.

An examination of Black male resilience, engagement, and academic achievement in college, particularly from the perspective of a quantitative methodology, allows for a deep understanding of the internal and external factors that enhance educational attainment among this student population. Moreover, resilience studies offer the opportunity to elicit the voices of Black men themselves to provide explanations of how they might navigate adversity in a specific cultural context (Kim & Hargrove, 2013).

Background of the Problem

Since the Reconstruction era of the 1860s when ex-slaves were provided public schools, the story of the Black male has been of incompetence, ineffectiveness, and failure. Many people believe that US K-12 schools are pillars of fairness; however, the statistics depict a truer
representation to the plight that Black men face. Some examples include the number of teachers certified to teach in schools. The U.S. Department of Education (2016) reported that 48% of teachers were certified in the subject they taught in schools with at least 50% Black students. This is in comparison with 65% in school with a White student population majority. In the subject English, the numbers were 59% and 68% (Black schools to white schools), and in science, they were 57% and 73%. Other examples can be seen in the number of children who are placed in special education classes or qualify for education assistance programming based on disabilities. Of Black children in the U.S. educational system, 12% received services for intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbances, and physical disabilities, as compared to 8.5% of White children (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

A Schott Foundation (2015) report found that Black male students are largely underrepresented in honors, gifted, and advanced placement programs. Also, according to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), Black male children are suspended and expelled at a rate much higher than any other racial group in the K-12 school system in the U.S. which is 3 times higher than that of White students. Accordingly, these disconcerting numbers lead to the overwhelmingly televised and reported issues with Black men that are incarcerated at six times the rates of White men. Yet, many Black men traverse through the disparities of the K-12 system and graduate high school, although these statistical trends are not conducive to improving the number of Black students who attend college.

College degree attainment is regarded as the equalizing source of the gaps in poverty and wealth in the U.S. (Harper, 2009). As the global economy continues to emerge and the market for labor changes, most jobs require post-secondary degrees for employment. Employment statistics produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed between 2016 and 2026, the
number of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree will increase by 10%, a master’s degree by 17%, and a doctoral degree or a professional degree by 13% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). More Black male students need to attend and complete a college degree at least, to meet the demand of employers. However, many Black men begin college unprepared for the academic and social rigors. Additionally, and more importantly, most PWIs are unprepared to assist Black men to maintain and progressively develop their academic pursuits to eventual graduation.

While a larger proportion of Black men attend PWIs, a considerable number of Black male students graduate from HBCUs (Allen, 1992). HBCUs represent only 3% of U.S. institutions of higher learning; however, they graduate nearly 23% of all Black students (NCES, 2017). The differences in graduation rates of Black men from HBCUs as compared to PWIs suggest that the cultural milieu of PWIs lack the infrastructure to support and sustain Black males on their campuses. The issues that Black men face at PWIs are similar to those they face in everyday society. They encounter racism and psychological stressors that undermine the chances for optimal academic performance (Harper, 2007).

**Problem Statement**

As the complex issues faced by Black men within the school have grown, society has typically shouldered the blame on the individuals instead of the systematically oppressive education structure. Studies have shown that from Pre-K to high school, Black men have to endure inexperienced teachers, lower quality books, less access to high-quality curriculum, and unjust suspension and expulsion practices (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). All while competing against the majority White students from rich suburban school districts in statewide and national testing systems. Notwithstanding, there are a plethora of Black men who persevere and gain admittance into post-secondary institutions. The numbers of Black men who make it continue to rise,
however, these school lack the institutional support necessary to guide them through eventual graduation. Graduation from college is a cornerstone to achieving any modicum of success in the U.S. It directly influences opportunities in careers, socioeconomic status, housing, and even marriage (Schott, 2015; Western et al. 2008).

There has been a transformation in the narrative of Black male success in college as of recent, partly due to the number of Black men who demonstrate resilience through the consequences of these oppressive systems and prevail. Some of these men attend HBCUs that support them to thrive and develop their educational prowess. However, most Black men attend PWIs. Through an investigation of the characteristics and qualities of Black men who persevered and graduated, PWIs could gain a clearer understanding of how retain and sustain Black men on their campuses.

As aforementioned, the educational history of Black males in the U.S. motivated the conception of this study. It arises from experiences of Black men who attended PWIs and persisted through the challenges of an educational system that was not built for their race. They faced impediments within their familial, educational, and financial situations that did not promote or inspire their educational pursuits. Other impediments included lack of role models who went to college, insufficient knowledge of higher educational systems, and an inadequate understanding of the application and loan processes. Many of these Black men were the first in their family to attend or graduate from college. Aspiring Black male collegians merit the assurance of institutional practices dedicated to their success in education and life after college. Thus, the contributions of this study to Black male degree attainment are worthy of exploration.
Purpose of Study

Research is needed on the factors that contribute to Black male success in undergraduate PWIs. Although the number of Black males who enroll in PWIs continues to rise, Black male graduation rates are steadily in decline (Harper, 2009). Of the Black men who do persist and graduate, little is known concerning the factors which fostered their success. By focusing on the academic resilience and student engagement of the Black men who persist, PWIs can better support the success of future generations of Black men who attend their schools. However, much of the literature concerning resilience has not addressed the issues faced by Black men in college or the factors that foster success.

Academic achievement is proven to be an effective measurement of academic success in education (York et al., 2015). Academic achievement can be predicted by exploration of the factors of academic resilience and student engagement (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2007, 2012; Kim & Hargrove, 2013; Morales & Trotman, 2004; Strayhorn, 2008). Earlier research has investigated how certain demographic variables have an influence on academic achievement for Black males. These include demographic variables such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ultimate degree aspiration, and occupational aspirations (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2007, 2012). However, the relationship between academic resilience, student engagement, and demographic variables’ influence on Black male academic achievement has not been examined. This study seeks to fill the gap and provide evidence for Black male resilience and academic achievement from an anti-deficit approach. This study will also expand upon the earlier work of Allen (1992) and Harper (2012) by examining the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement, and how these factors predict the academic achievement of Black males attending a PWI.
Research Questions

From the above discussion, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement among Black males?
2. Does academic resilience predict academic achievement among Black males?
3. Does student engagement predict academic achievement among Black males?
4. Does academic resilience better predict academic achievement above student engagement among Black males?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses guiding the study are as follows:

1. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between academic resilience and student engagement among Black males.
2. Academic resilience will predict academic achievement among Black males.
3. Student engagement will predict academic achievement among Black males.
4. Academic resilience will better predict academic outcomes beyond student engagement among Black males.

Definitions of Key Terms

Resilience: Resilience has been defined as the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Rutter, 1987).

Academic Resilience: Academic resilience refers to educational achievement outcome anomalies that occur after an individual has been exposed to statistical risk factors (Morales & Trotman, 2004).
Deficit Framework: This term is used to describe previous studies which explored the negative factors and experiences of Black males in college. Deficit frameworks defined the Black male college experience by their problems and why they did not persevere or graduate.

Anti-Deficit Framework: This term is used to describe the current study which explores the positives factors and experiences of the Black males in college. Anti-deficit frameworks define the Black Male college experience by their resiliency and reason why they persist and graduate. Harper (2007) contends some of the guiding research used to inform this framework focused on “understanding why black men excel instead of adding to the already well-understood reasons that they fail” (p. 61).

Black male students/collegians: This term is used to describe men enrolled in college who identify themselves as being of African, Black descent, and bi-racial or multiracial with Black heritage (inclusive of Caribbean).

Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCU): Any historic African American college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of African Americans and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency (Higher Education Act, 1965).

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI): Term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment (Lomotey, 2010).

Student Engagement: Student engagement is the combined effort, time, and resources invested by students and their institutions to promote positive educational outcomes (Kuh, 2009).

Academic Achievement: Academic achievement captures a student’s ability to meet performance criteria as a way to measure learning or knowledge; in other words, grades are proxy measurements intended to capture attainment of learning objectives and acquisition of skills and
competencies. The field of education relies heavily on GPA as the standard for assessing academic achievement (York et al., 2015).

*Academic Success:* Academic success within this study refers to persisting through the first year of college—in part due to an acceptable GPA based on the criterion of the Midwestern PWI this study was conducted at.

**Significance of Study**

Although deficit frameworks uncover institutional policies and demographic variables that combine to decrease Black male graduation rates, this research also opposes the perception that Black men cannot succeed in college. However, some recent literature has utilized an anti-deficit framework which elucidates the positive attributes of Black men who have graduated despite the institutional inequities (Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2008; Bridges 2010; Williamson 2010). There is a high need for an examination of the attributes of those men and how the navigated the path to success. With that goal in mind, this study will examine the factors of resilience and engagement that help Black men attain academic success in college. This study contends that Black men who exhibit resiliency and engagement will provide substantial information to colleges and future Black male collegians on how to achieve post-secondary success.

This study has fundamental implications for policy and practice in that the findings may elucidate factors that prevent not only Black students’ graduation in general, but specifically Black male students. Important implications for policy may include formal mentoring programs and advising for Black males at PWIs. Through the lens of faculty and student engagement, it could also include more opportunities for other faculty-student interactions in formal settings. Additionally, it may include opportunities for PWIs to support and advance Black student led
organizations which address toxic racial campus climates. Such programming could aim to increase persistence and graduation of Black men.

**Limitations**

This study relies on self-reported GPA from participants, which can be problematic. Although self-reported GPA is common in research, it can be risky considering the reliance of students to provide an accurate and unbiased rating (Cassady, 2000). Likewise, the use of Likert-scales in the surveys could affect results; the differences between agree and strongly agree could be arbitrary to the participant, but important for the results of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). Finally, the ARS-30 instrument, notwithstanding sound psychometric properties, has only one previous application.

**Delimitations**

The participants of this study are from one Midwestern PWI. Consequently, generalizing the results can be problematic. In consideration of this studies’ inherent anti-deficit approach, Black men are not a monolithic group and a subset of Black men from one Midwestern PWI do not speak for the experiences of all Black men at PWIs. Furthermore, this study will not include Black men who are past the 6-year mark of attending college, which can affect the generalizability of the results. This study also does not include data from Black men who attend HBCUs, which confer degrees to a much higher number of Black men than do PWIs. Finally, this study focuses on the experiences of Black men and not Black women. The intention of this study is not to exclude the experiences of Black women. However, statistics have shown that Black women continue to achieve and graduate from college at a higher rate than Black men (NCES, 2019).
Organization of the Study

The organization of this study constitutes five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction and includes the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research hypotheses, definitions of terms, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 includes a review of the related literature that focuses on higher education in the U.S., Black males in education, Black males attending PWIs, Black male success attending HBCUs, academic resilience construct, student engagement construct, Black male student engagement in college, academic achievement and GPA, socioeconomic status, ultimate degree aspirations, parent educational level, and a summary of literature reviewed. Chapter 3 describes the research method used in the study, population, data collection and analysis method, and research questions. Chapter 4 provides the results and details the findings. Finally, Chapter 5 offers conclusions, discussion, and implications.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Higher Education in the United States

From a philosophical perspective, higher education in the U.S. has been built on the promise of equal opportunity and upward social and financial mobility for all. As opposed to other countries where higher education systems branch from one centralized university, the U.S. system is shaped by state, local, religious, and diverse societal needs (Goldin & Katz, 1999). Subsequently, higher education in the U.S. reflects the needs of the broader multicultural and multiracial society which is complex and multifaceted. It is noted that in its inception, higher education was offered exclusively to the elite and wealthy classes of White Americans (Goldin & Katz, 1999). This practice excluded those of any religious or racial/ethnic minority status. However, in the late 19th into the 20th century, evolutions in social classes, civil rights revolutions, and economic gains transformed access to higher education (Eckel & King, 2004). In modern society, many Americans view higher education as the pathway to success and the optimal way to achieve “the American dream.”

As accessibility into higher education began to widen, the number of public and private post-secondary institutions grew. Public institutions within the U.S. systems are under three categories: universities, state colleges, and community colleges (Eckel & King, 2004). According to the NCES (2020b), there were 4,298 degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Typically, public universities grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, (master's and doctoral), and have larger enrollments. State colleges are smaller, and tend to offer on
bachelor’s degrees, while some offer master’s degrees. The NCES (2020b) reported that there are 1,626 public colleges in the U.S. Community colleges, or two-year colleges, provide associate degrees, vocational and technical training. Community colleges typically serve as cost effective and provide preparation to 4-year colleges. According to NCES (2020b) there were 1,528 degree granting community colleges.

Private institutions cover a multifaceted range of structures found in American higher education. As Goldin & Katz (1999) writes, the most prestigious and highly selective institutions, whether they be Ivy League research universities or smaller liberal arts colleges, are private; but so too are the least well-known institutions. Typically, these institutions have limited resources and are built on the beliefs under a distinct form of religious or political affiliation. According to NCES (2020b) there are 1,687 private nonprofit schools and 985 private for-profit schools. One of the most pressing issues in American higher education, whether public or private schools, are the students they serve.

As noted above, higher education in the U.S. began with only the most elite White Americans. Although the elitism has mostly sustained in the private or Ivy league institutions, overall, White Americans continue to dominate the higher education system. Of the universities and college listed above, there were a total of 16.6 million undergraduates enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions (NCES, 2020a). A breakdown of racial/ethnic students showed that some 8.7 million students were White, 3.4 million were Hispanic, 2.1 million were Black, 1.1 million were Asian, 647,000 were of two or more races, 120,000 were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 45,000 were Pacific Islander (NCES, 2020a). The core problem of American higher education is the disproportional number of White students being educated as compared to all other races.
The lack of ethnic and racial diversity on higher education campuses in the U.S. began early and still exists today. This enacted the birth of different types of universities that provided higher education to students exclusively based on their race. Institutions such as HBCUs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) offer higher education to those who would otherwise not have access. According to the NCES (2020b) there are 539 HSIs, and 32 TCUs. In 2018, there were 101 HBCUs that are typically found in Southern states with a few located in the Northeast (NCES, 2017). HBCUs enroll less than 20% of Black undergraduates, yet they produce one-third of all Black bachelor’s degrees.

Although there are institutions that exclusively target Black students, this population is disproportionately earning college degrees. Recent statistics showed that the U.S. college graduation rate for Black students is at a rate of 42%, which is substantially lower than that of White students (NCES, 2019). There have been many explanations for the cause of such dismal graduation rates. Flores (2007) found that Black students lack the access to advanced-level high school courses to prepare them for the college. There is a lack of understating of Black culture which exists between instructors and administration, limited resources to quality mentoring programs, constant racial stereotyping, and feelings of isolation (Dulabaum, 2016; Harper, 2007, 2009; Sledge, 2012). Another problem that has been is that many students drop out of college because they cannot afford to pay tuition and other educational expenses (Harper, 2012). Consequently, as Black student graduation rates remain low, so does the opportunities and benefits that come along with having earned a college degree.

Earning a college degree in the U.S. has been shown to have significant economic, social, and health benefits (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2006; Goldin and Katz, 2007; Grossman, 2006; Harper, 2015; Topel, 1999; Western et al. 2008). Even college students report improved job
prospects and financial security as a primary reason for college attendance (Astin et al., 2011). Although most studies will show the economic gains of postsecondary credentials, the benefits of a college education extend beyond financial success. Individuals who have a college degree have greater access to health care, are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors, be active and engaged citizens, and be in a position to provide better opportunities for their children (Brand, 2010; Cutler & Lleras-Muney 2011; Lagemann & Lewis, 2012).

The U.S. is well known to be a capitalistic society in which economic gain plays a crucial role. The data are clear” adults with postsecondary degrees are, in fact, more likely to be employed and to earn more than individuals who did not attend college according to a report by The College Board (2019). In 2018, among full-time workers between the ages of 25 to 34, median earnings among women at least a bachelor’s degree were $52,500, compared with $29,800 for those with a high school diploma. Median earnings among men with at least a bachelor’s degree were $63,300 compared with $39,800 for those with a high school diploma (College Board, 2019). Notably, the unemployment gap between having, or not having a bachelor’s degree has also increased the last several years. The unemployment for individuals 25 and older with at least a bachelor’s degree has consistently been about half of the unemployment rate for high school graduates. In 2018, the unemployment rate for high school graduates 25 to 34 with at least a bachelor’s degree was 2.2%, compared with 5.7% among high school graduates (College Board, 2019).

As the evidence shows, a college degree can earn individual’s financial success, however, differences in economic outcomes by race have persisted for centuries in the U.S. and continue up to the present day (Margo 2016). A U.S. Census Bureau (2019) report showed that the median household income of Black Americans was $39,500, compared with $65,000 for White
Americans. Moreover, Black households constitute less than 2 percent of those in the top one percent of the nation’s wealth distribution while white households constitute more than 96 percent of the wealthiest Americans (Insight Center for Community Economic Development, 2018). Studies have also shown that Black households with college degrees have less wealth than White households whose highest degree earner did not complete high school. In most cases, Black students must earn at least a post-graduate degree to compete in levels of wealth with White households that only have some college or an associate degree (Hamilton et al. 2015).

While financial and career benefits of a college degree have been clearly established, there are also non-economic gains such as health and access to healthcare, social, levels of happiness, and family stability. In their research, Herd et al. (2007) elucidated the relationship between socioeconomic status position and health by showing how different facets of socioeconomic status position affect different stages of health problems. Social benefits to education have also shown that higher education seeks to prepare individuals for longer, fuller, and more productive lives (Astin, 1997). Yang (2008) found that increases in education lead to higher levels of happiness and greater access to healthcare. Lastly, education has been studied to be a mediating factor in family stability. Western et al. (2008) found that disparities in education and single parenthood contributed to income inequality, but rising educational attainment offset these effects.

The benefits of higher education in the U.S. clearly show the importance of earning a college degree. There are many Black men who have gone on to receive a college degree and reap these benefits. However, the low number of Black males earning post-secondary success conveys pressing problems that unquestionably warrant ongoing scholarly examination. It would
be naïve to assume that the issues Black men face in obtaining college degrees began when they walked on campus. An understanding in the history of Black males in education is essential.

**Black Males in Education**

Research on Black male hopelessness and underachievement in education examines these factors as early as high school. Numerous researchers have documented the challenges that Black males face as early as high school (Flores, 2007; Moore et al., 2010; Tatum, 2006; Toldson, 2008). The lack of academic achievement for Black students in high school often refers to cultural and environmental deficiencies (Stewart, 2007), although research should highlight the disparities in resources in racial minority school systems. It is important to understand the impediments Black men face in high school that will inevitably affect their lack of participation in college. Specifically, Black students lack the access to high-level courses to prepare them for the college (Flores, 2007; Moore et al., 2010). In fact, only 57% of African American students attend schools where they have access to the full complement of courses necessary to be college ready (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

The quality of instruction for Black students in high school is very low. The USDE Office of Civil Rights (2014) reported that schools with the highest percentage of Black students in their district are more likely to employ teachers who are new to the profession; nearly half a million Black students in the U.S. attend schools where 80% or fewer of teachers meet all state certification and licensure requirements (USDE, Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Another issue is the fit of White teachers who teach Black students in high schools. Black high school students are typically taught by White female teachers who lack the cultural competence or sensitivity to teach students of color (Anthony et al., 2007; Welton & Martinez, 2014). Most of the teachers that Black students have in K–12 don’t resemble their communities. This presents a problem as
growing evidence shows that having a same race teacher aids student of color in earning better
test scores, fewer suspensions, and lower dropout rates (Lindsay & Hart, 2017).

Evidence has also shown systematic biases in low teacher expectations towards Black
males as they are depicted as incapable and incompetent (Gershenson et al., 2015; Irving & Hudley,
2008). Additionally, Black males are three times as likely to be placed in special education classes
than any other racial demographic (Nickson & Kritsonis, 2006). Additionally, Black men are
suspended and expelled at far greater rates than other races and their Black female counterparts.
In 2016, the percentage of Black male students who had ever been suspended from school
(48.3%) was more than twice the percentage of Hispanic (22.6%) and White (21.4%) male
students who had ever been suspended (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). Similarly, the percentage of
Black female students who had ever been suspended (29.0%) was more than twice the percentage
of Hispanic (11.8%) and White (9.4%) female students who had ever been suspended (Musu-
Gillette et al., 2016). The need to identify challenges that Black males faced in high school
served as a catalyst for deficit-informed research of Black men in college.

Research on Black male undergraduates is typically conducted at PWIs and emphasizes
the underachievement of Black men (Harper, 2015). The challenges Black men experience are
studied as either individual background disadvantages or unsupportive institutional practices
and policies at PWIs. A common individual disadvantage is that Black men are academically
inadequate and more interested in athletics than academic achievement (Benson, 2000; Harper,
2009; Noguera, 2003). Other researchers underscored that tuition rates and the decreased financial
resources of Black families force Black men to dropout early from PW’Is (Cuyjet, 2006;
Fleming, 1984). There are some who argue that Black men lack direction from family members
or social groups which have limited to no experience in the PWI milieu (Harper, 2007; Sledge, 2012).

Negative institutional practices and a lack of institutional support have also been widely researched in the underachievement of Black men at PWIs. The lack of Black male degree attainment and retention at PWIs derive from hostile racial climate factors. Black men are expected to persist in college environments where racism, marginalization, and microaggressions are experienced daily (Carter, 2008; Flowers, 2004; Sue et al., 2007). Professors and White peers at PWIs often use negative stereotypes of Black men in the classroom and expect lower academic performance (Davis, 1994; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015). Studies have also shown that Black men are less likely to be engaged in social groups or campus activities and prefer social isolation at PWIs (Harper, 2009). These studies prove that PWIs lack the social climate necessary to help Black men succeed in college. Although revealing, this deficit-informed research does not uncover the characteristics of Black men who prevail through the adversity. As Harper (2015) noted, “it seems just as necessary to investigate how one third who persisted through graduation managed to do so especially given what literature says about racism, stereotypes, and low expectations that threaten their success and sense of belonging at PWIs” (p. 647).

Black Male Students Attending PWIs

The discussion of Black male success in higher education is grounded on the seminal work of Allen (1992) and later qualitative work of Harper (2012). In a national study of 1,800 Black students who were enrolled at historically Black colleges and institutions (HBCUs) or PWIs (928 enrolled at HBCUs and 872 enrolled at PWIs), Allen investigated how students’ educational backgrounds (time spent studying, class level, and high school GPA), campus experiences (racial composition/unity), and personal adjustment (relations with White students...
and faculty) influenced academic achievement (measured by GPA), social involvement, and occupational aspirations. Allen (1992) found that a combination of individual and institutional characteristics were a major predictor of academic achievement, social engagement, and occupational goals. More specifically, a student’s interpretation and subsequent reaction to environmental and institutional stressors (e.g., racial climate) determined their success. Allen emphasized that HBCUs provided an environment that was more conducive for the academic success of Black students.

Harper (2012) focused on success factors across institutional contexts by adding a voice to the quantitative data and departing from the tendency to frame Black male student retention using a deficit model. Harper used a qualitative framework to document the academic achievement of 219 Black men at 43 colleges and universities across 20 states. Through interviews and focus groups, Black men shared that the factors which contributed to their success in college included pre-college support, familial and peer support, positive relationships with faculty, and engagement in campus activities. Allen’s pivotal study provided evidence that Black students experience institutional impediments at PWIs that impede success. However, Harper highlighted the ability of Black college student to persist and achieve success at PWIs in spite of these obstacles.

As the literature revealed, being successful for Black males means ultimately having the ability to employ self-imposed protective practices that provide psychological distance from perceived discriminatory sources, whether individual or institutional (Bridges, 2010; Williamson, 2010). Among the protective factors that researchers have found, there is a similar stance that Black men have taken that reveals a prove-them-wrong behavior (Bridges, 2010; Harper, 2009; Moore et al., 2003). In their qualitative study of 24 Black males in STEM majors, Moore and colleagues (2003) found that Black men were hyper-vigilant concerning academics. A majority
view of Black intellectual inferiority on campus made it necessary for these men to adopt a hyper-assertive academic posture in response. These men exhibited a deep self-efficacy with regard to academics and reported being successful in their persistent efforts to engage with faculty members (Moore et al., 2003). Similarly, Harper (2009) interviewed 143 Black males from 30 PWIs and also found that they adopted prove-them-wrong behaviors by developing relationships with faculty and peers and joining clubs or organizations. Their self-efficacy and engagement on campus were major factors that contributed to their academic achievement. Practicing prove-them-wrong behavior, these Black men developed meaningful and supportive relationships with peers and faculty (Harper, 2009).

As opposed to engaging with peers and faculty, the six men in Bridge’s (2010) case study practiced psychological distancing at a southeastern PWI. These Black men exhibited prove-them-wrong behavior by reflecting on the accomplishments of their race, and motivating themselves to persist (Kim & Hargrove, 2013). However, their lack of engagement resulted in limited interaction with their peers and low satisfaction with the college experience. Other researchers have also found that student engagement is a significant predictor of Black male success at PWIs. For instance, Flowers (2012) utilized a case study to interview senior Black male engineering majors at an HBCU. Results showed that they exhibited self-efficacy, which was influenced by support from their families, institution, and faculty.

In a mixed methods study of 99 Black males who majored in STEM fields at a PWI, Williamson (2010) concluded that familial support and supportive relationships influenced Black male achievement as measured by GPA. Strayhorn (2008) analyzed data from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ; Pace, 1980), consisting of data for 231 Black men attending a PWI, and found that peer and mentor support and self-efficacy were statistically
significant predictors of Black male academic achievement as measured by GPA. Findings from these studies underline the importance of understanding persistence strategies employed by academically successful Black males who attend PWIs—specifically, because an individual’s educational attainment directly impacts their job opportunities and earnings. College graduates are more likely to gain job opportunities and eventual wealth (Harper, 2004). College graduates are more likely to have jobs and less than half the unemployment rate for high school graduates on average (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2016).

The many obstacles Black men will face at a PWI can be detrimental to their academic achievement, completion of college, and eventual job opportunities. To excel, they must have the ability to utilize strategies, and learn to cope when they encounter difficulties. This is an example of the resilience that successful Black male collegians have shown. However, there is a lack of research on specifically how the construct of resiliency plays a role in the success of Black males who persist in PWIs.

**Black Male Success Attending HBCUs**

Since they began to operate in the 1890s, HBCUs have given opportunities for higher education to Black and other racial and ethnic minority students. The infrastructure of HBCUs is a credit to how they encourage Black student success, such as, culturally relevant curriculums, culturally tailored student organizations, and same race faculty mentoring (Gasman, 2007). Moreover, HBCUs are designed to honor and protect the experiences and histories of their students and their students’ families. HBCUs represent a unique educational context in which Black men can excel and attain post-secondary success. There is a plethora of research that highlights the ways that HBCUs provide a safe and inclusive campus environment, empower Black students, encourage student involvement, and are supportive of Black students’

Some scholars have shown how the HBCU structure cultivates a sense of satisfaction in Black students by means of an inclusive environment with the campus and close relationships with instructors. In a mixed-methods study, Fleming (1984) compared first year and senior students in both HBCUs and PWIs on a variety of measures, including the Black Ideology Scale, GPA measures, and assertiveness scales. She found that the level of post-graduation aspiration, student involvement, and cognitive growth displayed by each respective group tended to be higher for Black males at HBCUs. Fleming (1984) also found that Black student at HBCUs felt closer to their teachers as role models, experienced greater satisfaction and positive outcomes from the educational experience. Particularly, Fleming (1984) stated, “Rather than acting to maintain segregation, black colleges appear to effectively impart the orientation and skills that allow black students to function well in the larger society” (p. 153).

Likewise, Nettles (1988) conducted a survey study which compared the academic and social experiences of Black college students at HBCUs to White students attending PWIs. His findings indicated that Black males at HBCUs were more socially integrated, earned better grades, and perceived their college to be more supportive of their academic success. Nettles (1988) also found that faculty interactions at HBCUs were a significant factor in the success of Black students. Allen (1992) found that found that Black males at HBCUs had higher educational and career goals, had more positive relationships with faculty, and were more involved on campus. Likewise, Conrad and Gasman (2015) found that exposure to good role models, attitudes, habits for learning and social development, and aspirations for attainment post-undergraduate was a significant factor in each HBCUs models of success.
Another distinctive feature of HBCUs is their ability to retain Black students on campus, enhance Black student persistence, and guide Black students to graduation. According the NCES (2020b), 74% of their degrees were conferred to Black students. Specifically, Black students earned 43% of the 5,500 associate’s degrees, 81% of the 32,600 bachelor’s degrees, 71% of the 7,700 master’s degrees, and 62% of the 2,500 doctor’s degrees (NCES, 2020b). Due to these high graduation rates of Black students, additional studies have sought to identify the factors which influence the persistence of Black students, and particularly, Black males.

Palmer and Gasman (2008) utilized interview data which discovered five factors that contributed to the persistence of Black male students at HBCUs: (a) faculty relationships, (b) supportive administrators, (c) peer encouragement/support, (d) role models/mentors, and (e) a supportive campus community. They also found that HBCUs are rich in social capital, which is vital to the academic success of Black men who began post-secondary education academically underprepared and persisted to graduation. Likewise, Hamrick et al. (2004) examined statistical links between institutional type, selectivity, and instructional and student affairs expenses on graduation rates. Utilizing independent bivariate regression, their study provided evidence that attending an HBCU has a statistically significant effect on graduation rates. Specifically, the mean graduation rate for Black students at a PWI (42%) was over 10 percentage points greater than the corresponding result for Black students attending HBCUs (32%) (Hamrick et al., 2004).

It is noted that the retention, persistence, and graduation model for Black males at HBCUs is not a panacea for the attrition of Black males at all colleges, especially PWIs. Although, as this review elucidated, a consistent body of literature demonstrates that HBCUs nurture and support Black students and maintain high expectations for their academic success.
Nevertheless, similar to PWIs, HBCUs are also intently focused on investigating ways to increase the graduation rates for Black males (Palmer & Maramba, 2012).

**Academic Resilience**

Resilience refers to a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity (Rutter, 1987). Implicit within this notion are two critical conditions: (a) exposure to significant threat or severe adversity, and (b) the achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process (Rutter, 1987). The notion of resilience, which encompasses both risk and positive adaptation, provides an anti-deficit approach that seeks to examine the process of adjustment or recovery through the reduction of risk (Kim & Hargrove, 2013). Morales and Trotman (2004) expanded resilience to include academic resilience, which refers to educational achievement outcome anomalies that occur after an individual has been exposed to statistical risk factors.

Academic resilience has only recently become a focal point in the social science literature (Brown, 2008; Cavazos et al., 2010; Hartley, 2013; Taylor & Wang, 2000). The literature on student success typically highlights the reasons for student failure, instead of focusing on positive outcomes (Morales & Trotman, 2011). The construct of resilience differentiates itself and contributes to a positive conceptualization as it pertains to the academic performance of Black students. Notwithstanding the disconcerting statistics considered earlier, the fact remains that a percentage of Black students do prevail and exceed expectations. Resilience theory is based on the reasoning that if we learn how at-risk students succeed, we can better help those with the potential to succeed (Morales & Trotman, 2011). Consequently, a brief overview of the academic resilience paradigm and theoretical construct would be helpful.
Fundamentally, academic resilience is the statistically anomalous academic achievement of students who possess and challenge “risk factors” that predict failure for most students from similar circumstances (Morales & Trotman, 2004). Academic resilience more accurately aligns with the experiences of successful Black males when they describe the concept as “the process and results that are part of the life story of an individual who had been academically successful, despite obstacles” (Morales & Trotman, 2011, p. 8).

The definition provided by Morales and Trotman (2011) directly acknowledges the circumstances faced by Black men in college; it recognized their disproportionately low degree attainment with a focus on those who managed to succeed. Many of the problems that plague Black men today are associated with a lower socioeconomic status inherited from the history of American slavery—an impediment that has, unfortunately, become ingrained in the nation’s social fiber and institutions (Kim & Hargrove 2013). Therefore, understanding resilience allows researchers, counselors, and institutions to consider a new theoretical basis to build effective studies, public policy, and educational programs to further enhance the experiences of Black male students (Kim & Hargrove 2013).

Academic resilience research also has a history of focusing on racial and ethnic subpopulations. In addition to Mexican Americans (Cavazos et al., 2010), other groups include Native Americans (HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003), Puerto Ricans (Taylor & Wang, 2000), and Asian Americans (Crosnoe & Elder, 2004). Academic resilience has been gaining momentum in educational research as it seeks to explain academic achievement for Black students in K–12 and post-secondary institutions (Brown, 2008; Miller & MacIntosh, 1999).

Researchers have investigated other protective factors that influence academic resilience for racial and ethnic minority populations. Cavazos et al. (2010) interviewed 11 Latino college
students at a Hispanic serving institution (HSI) to examine the influence of five protective factors (high educational goals, support and encouragement from parents, intrinsic motivation, internal locus of control, and high self-efficacy) on academic resilience. Results showed that each factor had an influence on the student’s development of academic resilience, although the students were not performing well in high school as measured by GPA. Crosnoe and Elder (2004) conducted a similar quantitative study by examining the impact of familiar, peer, and teacher support on the academic resilience of Asian American students in grades 7–11. Results from their study showed that close relationships with teachers and involvement with friends were statistically significant factors in students who showed academic resilience by earning a GPA 3.0 or above.

Other researchers sought to explore protective factors to examine the influence of academic resilience of Black students specifically. Miller and MacIntosh (1999) examined the influence of cultural protective factors (e.g., racial socialization and racial identity) on academic resilience in a quantitative exploratory study. In a sample of 132 Black teenagers (83 females and 49 males), they found that racial identity was a statistically significant predictor of academic resilience. Although Miller and MacIntosh did not focus on college students, their study provided a model for future researchers. Almost a decade later, Brown (2008) examined the impact of racial socialization and support systems on the academic resilience of 153 Black students (108 females and 45 males) at a Midwestern PWI. Brown (2008) found that academic resiliency was positively correlated with racial socialization as well as various support systems. While resiliency research has increased steadily over the years, further examination of the resiliency of racial minorities, such as African Americans, is still needed (Brown, 2008; Kim & Hargrove 2013; Miller & MacIntosh, 1999). Furthermore, these studies did not focus exclusively on Black men, who graduate at a rate less than Black women at PWIs.
Through an academic resilience paradigm, colleges and universities can have a blueprint to enhance and cultivate the attributes and conditions that Black students have identified as critical to their success. Another benefit of resilience theory is that, because it looks at success over time, the longer-term benefits of particular attributes and conditions can be assessed. Also, the resilience model displays how multiple protective factors can work collaboratively, augmenting each other as they contribute to the success of the student.

The studies discussed earlier call for examination of how academic resilience facilitates success for Black students among other factors which promote academic achievement (Brown, 2008; Ford et al., 1996; Miller & MacIntosh, 1999), and specifically among Black men. Past studies have also shown that student engagement is significant in the academic achievement and success of Black students at PWIs (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2009). A brief discussion of student engagement will provide a basis for inquiry.

**Student Engagement**

Student engagement is a multidimensional construct with different defining features due to its complexity. Kuh (2009) defined student engagement as the combined effort, time, and resources invested by students and their institutions to promote positive educational outcomes, while Gunuc and Kuzu (2014) define student engagement as “the quality and quantity of students’ psychological, cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions to the learning process as well as to in-class/out-of-class academic and social activities to achieve successful learning outcomes” (p. 217). Several researchers have linked student engagement to positive educational outcomes in and out of the classroom, such as cognitive and intellectual skill development (Cruce et al., 2006; Kuh et al., 2007; Pike, 2000), persistence rates (Berger & Milem, 1999; Braxton et al., 2004; Tinto, 1993), and academic achievement as measured by GPA (Bush & Bush, 2010; Harper,
2009). Much of this evidence provided by student engagement research appropriately accounts for students’ race or ethnicity, which leads to the conclusion that students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds benefit from engagement in practices such as interacting with faculty and active learning (Harper, 2004). However, no existent research has focused on the relationship between student engagement and academic resilience as a positive educational outcome.

Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009) included two concepts for student engagement that emphasize the responsibility of the student and the institution. A student who is engaged with their institution feels connected to learning and developing new experiences offered by their institution. The first component of student engagement is named student involvement, which is the amount of physical and psychological energy students allocate to educational involvements (Astin, 1984). This includes the student’s willingness to participate in class activities and seek out additional opportunities to connect with their professors and other students. According to Gunuc and Kuzu (2014), this dimension of the student engagement construct includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. Cognitive engagement (as seen in Figure 1) refers to the student’s approaches to and understanding of their own learning. Emotional engagement refers to the student’s emotional reactions to their peers and professors. It also includes the student’s sense of belonging to the university and feeling a member of the institution. Behavioral engagement includes the student’s participation in in-class activities (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014).
Figure 1. Gunuc and Kuzu (2014)’s Student Engagement Model.

Black Male Student Engagement in College

Research concerning Black student involvement usually compares Black males to their female counterparts (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2004). Among these studies, Harper (2004) found that African American females spent more time preparing for class, sought out faculty more, and worked harder to meet faculty expectations than did African American men. Allen (1992) found that Black females had more faculty interaction than Black males, which contributed to their academic achievement. However, it could be argued that comparing Black male educational outcomes to Black females perpetuate the deficit-informed model for Black males. This study will focus exclusively on Black male student engagement to understand the complexity of involvement practices at PWIs within this group.

Wolf-Wendel et al.’s (2009) second component of student engagement involves the many resources and efforts an institution puts into creating and maintaining a nurturing environment
that promotes student involvement (Kuh, 2001). According to Gunuc and Kuzu (2014), this definition of student engagement is referred to as campus engagement. This includes participation in out of class activities such as campus events or being part of a social group offered by the university. It is a critical component of student engagement for the success and academic achievement of Black males attending PWIs; however, the research on Black male campus engagement often compares PWIs and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (Allen, 1992; Flowers, 2012). This is in part due to the multicultural appealing environment of HBCUs and their emphasis on student engagement.

“It can be argued that HBCUs were created to give Black students a deeper level of involvement or engagement within the context of the community and civil rights” (R. Morris, personal communication, February 5, 2020). Many HBCU/PWI comparative studies have considered the effects of Black student academic outcomes and student engagement. These studies consistently showed that HBCUs offer more variable culturally competent and appealing settings for Black student engagement that improve academic and achievement outcomes (Harper, 2015). The seminal study of HBCU studies was conducted by Fleming (1984). He found that Black students felt a greater sense of connectedness, affiliation, and power at HBCUs as compared to PWIs, which had a significant influence on their cognitive and intellectual development. Allen (1992) reported that HBCUs provided a more positive social and psychological environment for African Americans than PWIs. Subsequently, students were more inclined to engage in campus activities and seek support from faculty. As a result of the conducive environment at HBCUs, Black students are able to achieve better grades and have higher occupational aspirations.
It is also essential that the student feels that they are part of their institution and have a sense that they belong. Sense of belonging refers to a student’s sense of one’s own identity, self-respect, and a positive effect in association with the Institution (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014). Students need to feel that they are embraced by other individuals in the social milieu of their university and that they are supported and involved in the environment (Goodenow, 1992). A sense of belonging has also been shown to be an indicator of students’ academic achievement and positive influence on their overall perceptions of positive educational outcomes at their institution (Goodenow, 1992). Harper (2004) compared male and female African American students’ engagement and satisfaction at 12 HBCUs. Findings showed that men and women shared similar gains in engagement patterns, benefited equally from a supportive HBCU environment, and had similar satisfaction with their school.

Evidence has clearly shown that PWIs lack the practices necessary to enhance student engagement for Black males in comparison to HBCUs. However, there are Black males who commit themselves to engage at PWIs and achieve degree attainment (Harper, 2009). This study seeks to fill the gap in the literature by investigating Black male student engagement without the comparison to HBCUs. As Fries-Britt (1997) states, “The disproportionate focus on Black underachievement in the literature not only distorts the image of the community of Black collegians, it creates, perhaps unintentionally, a lower set of expectations for Black student achievement” (p.556).

Additionally, this study aims to examine the effect of other variables that have been shown to influence Black male academic achievement such as, socioeconomic status, GPA, ultimate degree aspiration, and parents’ highest education (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2007, 2012).
Academic Achievement and GPA

Academic achievement captures a student’s ability to meet performance criteria as a way to measure learning or knowledge; in other words, grades are proxy measurements intended to capture attainment of learning objectives and acquisition of skills and competencies (York et al., 2015). The field of education relies heavily on GPA as the standard for assessing academic achievement (York et al., 2015). As such, GPA has been the most commonly used measure of academic achievement and success in studies of Black male outcomes in high school and college (Allen, 1992; Astin, 1993; Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005; Strayhorn, 2010).

For many years, national tests such as the ACT have been utilized to predict the college readiness and success of students. Allensworth & Clark (2020) found evidence that high school grade point averages predicted college graduation rates five times more accurately than ACT scores. Their study examined 55,084 students who graduated from Chicago Public Schools between 2006 and 2009 and attended a four-year college. According to their study, the GPA correlation is consistent regardless of which school the student attended (Allensworth & Clark, 2020). In studies of college preparation or college readiness, evidence suggest the best predictor is high school GPA for Black college men (Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005). High school GPA is not only a predictor of knowledge and academic success, but also psychosocial factors for Black men such as persistence, social engagement, personal adjustments, and relationships with faculty (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2009).

In his study of over 1,800 Black students, Allen (1992) found that Black students who had good grades in high school, usually accomplished a higher level of academic achievement in college as measured by GPA. In Strayhorn’s (2010) study of Black male resilience, self-efficacy, and academic success at a PWI, he found that college high school GPA was a significant
predictor of college GPA. Strayhorn (2014) investigated the importance of a grit in predicting college GPA for a sample of Black men attending a PWI. He found that high school GPA was a significant predictor of college GPA among Black men in the study.

Several studies have utilized GPA as an outcome or predictor of Black male collegiate success (Farmer & Hope, 2015; Harper, 2009; Scott et al., 2017). Harper’s (2009) study of 142 Black men found that Black men with a college GPA of 3.0 or above were more likely to engage with the college campus and faculty members. Farmer & Hope (2015) investigated the retention and graduation for 562 Black males at a HBCU and found that students with higher first semester GPAs were more likely to be retained and to graduate than those with lower first semester GPAs. Scott et al. (2017) studied the factors that best predicted retention and graduation of 165 Black Males at a PWI and found that college GPA was a significant predictor.

Research clearly indicates that high school GPA is the greatest predictor of college readiness and academic achievement, and college GPA is the greatest predictor of post-secondary success. However, the relationship between academic resilience and GPA is not as clear in the literature. This study seeks to add to the literature by examining academic resilience on the academic achievement of Black males.

**Socioeconomic Status**

Socioeconomic status has long been one of the greatest challenges to success in higher education. The socioeconomic status of a student is most commonly determined by combining their parents’ educational level, occupational status, and income level (Jeynes, 2002). Parental wealth is associated with children’s educational attainment and academic achievement (Orr 2003). Studies have shown how socioeconomic status has effects on students of all ages from K-12 until college (Bush & Bush, 2010; Eamon, 2005; Hochschild, 2003; Orr, 2003; Strayhorn,
In the U.S., students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enroll in college and are earn degrees at a rate much lower than their more affluent peers, regardless of race (NCES, 2020c). Not surprisingly, Black students in general, and Black male students in particular, are disproportionately more likely than their White counterparts to hail from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (NCES, 2020c; Toldson, 2008). The difficulties colleges face in effectively teaching and graduating lower socioeconomic status students, such as Black men, continues to be a pressing issue.

As discussed earlier, challenges faced by Black males in college are amplified when they attend a PWI. As Black males are disproportionately more likely than Whites to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, they are also less likely to have prior exposure to educational milieus similar to the PWI, which makes social adjustment and academic success at PWIs tenuous (Bush & Bush 2010). Bush & Bush (2010) completed a mixed methods study of factors on the academic achievement of Black males and their perceptions of their college experience. They found that Black males of lower socioeconomic status perceptions of their PWI experience suggested they had greater amounts of dissatisfaction and did engage with the various segments of the college. Strayhorn (2008) found that the low retention of Black men at a PWI were predicted by the low socioeconomic status. Similarly, Ostrove & Long (2007) conducted a study of liberal arts PWI students. Of the Black men in the study, socioeconomic status was significantly associated with lower a sense of belonging at the PWI. Specifically, Black men with lower socioeconomic status felt like the PWI environment was bot suitable for their college success.

Studies have also shown that Black male fare better at HBCUs, even with those pressures of low socioeconomic background. Allen’s (1992) study that Black students attending HBCUs
entered college with lower socioeconomic status, their parents had lower educational attainment, and had poorer pre-college achievement levels than Black students attending PWIs. Yet, these men persisted and graduated. Palmer et al. (2009) found that impediments to Black males’ persistence at an HBCU had less to do with institutional characteristics, but more to do with the socioeconomic status of Black male students. The qualitative approach in this investigation revealed that Black males continually persisted and eventually graduated against the odds.

These studies convey the importance of considering Black male socioeconomic status when predicting collegiate success. Furthermore, despite national economic highs and lows, the earning of a college degree continues direct route to escaping poverty (Strayhorn, 2008). Therefore, it is imperative that research continues to pursue ways of increasing college graduation, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable students. This study seeks to add to the literature by including the factors of academic resilience and student engagement and their effects on socioeconomic status of the Black men in this study. To date, no other studies have investigated academic resilience of Black men with consideration of socioeconomic status.

**Ultimate Degree Aspirations**

For many people, going to college has more to do with one’s ability to earn more money. A post-secondary degree, whether it is a bachelor’s, master’s, or PhD, is the most common route to careers that demand higher skills and offer higher pay (Harper, 2007). Studies have shown that higher degrees in education have an influence on potential earnings later in life. For instance, a report by the U.S. Labor of Statistics (2019) showed that bachelor’s degree holders earn an average weekly pay of $1,248, or $64,896 per year, while master’s degree holders earn an average wage of $1,497 per week or $77,844 per year; master’s degree holders earn nearly $13,000 more per year than four-year degree holders. Finally, doctorate holders earn an average
of $1,883 per week, or $97,916 annually; for individuals with doctorates, that number is over $20,000 more than individuals with a master’s degree (U.S. Labor Statistics, 2019).

For Black males, the need for aspiring to high degrees is one of great importance not only for life earnings, but also persistence in college. Quite a few comprehensive studies on undergraduate experiences and general models of degree attainment and attrition have highlighted the importance of measuring educational aspirations (Allen, 1992; Astin, 1993; Harper, 2007, 2012, 2015; Strayhorn, 2008; Tinto, 1993). Allen (1992) found that a combination institutional characteristics and degree aspiration was a major predictor of academic achievement. Astin (1993) found that Black male persistence was predicted by the impact of faculty-student interactions. Strayhorn (2008) observed that aspiration was critical to Black male persistence at PWIs and was particularly significant to Black men who desired a masters or doctorates degree. Strayhorn (2008) stated, "Black men who hold graduate aspirations are 5.13 times more likely to be retained than those who hold lower aspirations" (p. 79).

Expanding on the research of those listed above, this study will investigate the effect of ultimate degree aspiration on the academic achievement of Black males. In the following study, an examination of Black male degree aspiration will be seen through the lens of academic resilience and student engagement. This study contends that Black males with higher degree aspirations will have high academic achievement.

**Parents Educational Level**

Another characteristic that may have an impact on college student persistence and engagement is parents’ educational level. There have been a number of studies that have examined the differences between students whose parents had earned college degrees and first-generation college students or those who parents did not earn a college degree (Brooks-Terry,
According to Brooks-Terry (1988), the higher educational system is difficult to navigate and many parents of first-generation college students don’t have the knowledge to advise their children on some of the basic necessities such as the college admissions process. In their study, Horn and Bobbitt (2000) found that students whose parents had attained no more than a high school diploma were least likely to aspire to a bachelor’s degree.

Pascarella et al. (2004) reported that, compared with students whose parents completed at least a bachelor’s degree, first-generation college students enrolled in and earned fewer credit hours, were more inclined to live off campus, worked more hours, participated in fewer extracurricular activities, and earned lower grades. Parents’ educational level has also been shown to directly influence the type of institution students attend and to have a positive impact on college student persistence, irrespective of high academic achievement and ability (Karen, 2002).

As it pertains to the present study, some researchers have investigated the impact of parent’s highest education for Black male college students. Terenzini et al. (1996) found that degree completion rates for first-generation Black male students are lower than their counterparts whose parents graduated with at least a bachelor’s degree. Palmer et al. (2014) noted that approximately two-thirds of Black male collegians are first-generation students; therefore, parents’ education level remains an important variable to account for in quantitative scholarship on academic success among Black college men. Strayhorn (2006) analyzed data from the Baccalaureate & Beyond 60 Longitudinal Study and found that first-generation student status was a significant predictor of college GPA controlling for background factors. Strayhorn’s analysis showed that first-generation student status was significant in explaining differences in
college cumulative GPA. Researchers such as these continue to show the importance and impact that parental level of education can have on the academic success of students, specifically, collegiate Black males.

**Summary of Literature Reviewed**

Most research on Black males’ in college explored factors that impeded graduation or portrays an unsuccessful journey that ends in dropout. The research presented in the literature outlined the history of Black males in higher education in the U.S. This chapter also provided literature on the institutional and individual factors which helped Black men to graduate, and discussion on the theoretical and empirical links between success in college, academic resilience, and student engagement. It also outlined how certain universities and colleges helped to cultivate those factors within Black men to guide them to collegiate success. To conclude this chapter, I synthesized previous literature on Black male student success and the various factors found in literature that inform academic achievement among Black college men in PWIs. The following chapter describes the methodology used for this study.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This Methods chapter will be divided into five subsections. First, the means of approval will be given. Second, the characteristics of the participants will be described. Third, there will be an explanation of the instruments selected along with the psychometric properties of each instrument. The Demographic Questionnaire will be utilized to gather background information on the participants including ethnicity, SES, and GPA; The Academic Resilience Scale- 30 (ARS-30) (Cassidy, 2016) to measure academic resilience; and the Student Engagement Scale (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014) will be utilized to measure student engagement. Fourth, procedures will be described about how data was collected. Finally, Pearson bivariate correlation and the logistic regression model will be discussed to analyze the data.

Approval of the Study

The study received approval through the university’s Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A).

Participants

Black men were recruited from a Midwestern PWI. This researcher engaged in a variety of techniques that included emails, visiting registered student organizations, posting of flyers (see Appendix B), and snowball sampling. Participants were 124 undergraduate Black males who are currently enrolled at a Midwestern PWI. To be eligible, 1st through 6th year students were enrolled in the previous term. The ages of participants were between 18 to 35 years old.
Measures

Across the literature, being successful for Black males means ultimately having an ability to employ self-imposed protective practices that provide psychological distance from what is perceived to be discriminatory sources, whether individual or institutional (Bridges, 2010). Findings from these studies explain the importance of understanding persistence strategies employed by academically successful Black male collegians in PWI environments. These strategies are an example of the resilience that successful Black male collegians have shown. However, there has not been as much research on specifically how the construct of resiliency plays a role in the success of Black male collegians who persist in PWIs. More specifically, academic resilience was chosen as a predictor variable due its applicability to ethnic populations. As such, this study will employ use of the Academic Resilience Scale- 30 (ARS-30) (Cassidy, 2016) to measure academic resilience and add to the quantitative research. The ARS-30 is a 30-item, context-specific measure which was developed based on academic resilience theory.

Another important predictor in much of the literature concerning student academic outcomes in PWIs is student engagement (Tinto, 1993; Allen, 1992; Pike, 2000; Kuh, 2001, 2004). Much of this evidence appropriately accounts for students’ race or ethnicity, which leads to the conclusion that students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds benefit from engagement in practices such as interacting with faculty and active learning (Harper et al., 2004). In his suggestions for future studies Allen (1992) discussed the need for further exploration of the relationship between social interactions, such as student engagement, and other positive factors that foster academic success for Black students. Accordingly, an important aim of my study is to investigate the influence of student engagement and academic resilience associated with academic outcomes for Black men. Also, this study sought to use a measure of student
engagement that focused not only on how the students practice engagement, but also captures the responsibility of the institution to engage the student as well. Therefore, the Student Engagement Scale (SES) (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014) was utilized to measure the predictor variable of student engagement.

**Demographic Questionnaire**

The demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) was used to obtain information about each participant. Items included participant age, ethnicity (African, African American, West Indian/Caribbean Black, Bi-racial/Multiracial), socioeconomic status, and current GPA. Additionally, students indicated their ultimate degree aspiration, occupational aspirations, undergraduate major, parents’ highest education, high school GPA, and class level.

**Student Engagement Scale (SES) (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014)**

The SES is a six-factor measure of student engagement that examines both campus and class engagement. Specifically, it measures the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of class engagement. Thus, it is rooted in the multidimensional conceptualization of student engagement, and also considers the out-of-class (campus engagement) and in-class (class engagement) factors of student engagement. The items of the SES were derived through previous measures of engagement and qualitative pilot interviews (Gunuc, 2013), and underlying theoretical constructs. The SES instrument is utilized to measure engagement on 6 subscales: (a) valuing, (b) sense of belonging, (c) cognitive engagement, (d) peer relationships (emotional engagement I), (e) relationships with faculty (emotional engagement II), and (f) behavioral engagement.

The six subscales were created from 41 key items on the SES survey using a combination of dimensional engagement theories that cover psychological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral
aspects of campus and class engagement. Items are scored on a five-point Likert-type scale, with scores ranging from 1 (‘I totally disagree’) to 5 (‘I totally agree’). Within the dimension of campus engagement are sense of belonging and valuing which Gunuc and Kuzu (2014) refer to psychological engagement. Sense of belonging is measured by 8 items that assess how the student feels embraced and supported by the university. An example item inquires “I feel myself as a part of the campus.” Valuing is measured by 3 items that assess the student’s perception on the importance of education. An example item determines “I believe university is important to me.”

Within the dimension of class engagement are cognitive engagement, peer relationships (emotional engagement I), relationships with faculty (emotional engagement II), and behavioral engagement. Cognitive engagement is measured by 10 items and assesses students’ approaches to and understanding of their own learning (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014). An example item inquires “I try to do my best during classes.” Peer relationships (emotional engagement I) is measured by 6 items which assess the degree that students engage with their peers. An example item asks, “I like seeing my friends in class.” Relationships with faculty (emotional engagement II) is measured by 10 items and assess the students’ overall feeling towards university faculty. An example item includes “I like communicating with my teachers.” Behavioral engagement is measured by 4 items and includes participation and attendance in class activities. An example item includes “I carefully listen to other students in class.”

Construct validity was examined with EFA and CFA, and for each analysis a different sample group was formed (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014). The total variance explained the six factors of the scale was calculated as 59%. The Cronbach’s alpha (α) internal consistency reliability coefficient was calculated for the total scale as .957 via EFA and as .929 via CFA. Each of the six factors had α’s that range from .71 to .91 (α = .823 for the factor of valuing; α = .896 for
sense of belonging; $\alpha = .878$ for cognitive engagement; $\alpha = .853$ for peer relationships [emotional engagement-I]; $\alpha = .890$ for relationships with the faculty member [emotional engagement-II] and $\alpha = .716$ for the factor of behavioral engagement). A higher score for SES was regarded as an indicator that the student had a high level of engagement with the campus and class, while a lower score for SES demonstrated that the student’s engagement was weak or that disengagement could occur.

Approval was sought and received from the authors of the SES to utilize the instrument in this study (see Appendix D).

**The Academic Resilience Scale - 30 (ARS-30; Cassidy, 2016)**

The ARS-30 is a 30-item, context-specific construct measure of academic resilience based on student responses to academic adversity. It was developed based on Martin and Marsh’s academic resilience theory (Martin & Marsh, 2006). The AR instrument is utilized to measure engagement on 3 subscales: (a) perseverance, (b) reflective and adaptive help-seeking, and (c) negative affect and emotional response. Responses are rated using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (likely) to 5 (unlikely) after reading a short vignette. Participants are asked to imagine themselves as the student characterized in the vignette. Scoring of positively phrased items are reversed so that a high ARS-30 score indicates greater academic resilience. With each of the scale items weighted equally, the global ARS-30 score, achieved by summing responses to the 30 individual items, has a range of 30–150.

Each of the emerging subscales represents common features evident in existing research studies investigating resilience, with clear similarities and overlaps with concepts and constructs identified as relevant in previous studies of general and context-specific resilience (Cassidy, 2016). The perseverance subscale, includes items which feature hard work and trying, not giving
up, sticking to plans and goals, accepting and utilizing feedback, imaginative problem solving and treating adversity as an opportunity to meet challenges and improve as central themes (Cassidy, 2016). Example items states, “I would use the feedback to improve my work,” and I would look forward to showing that I can improve my grades.”

The reflecting and adaptive-help-seeking subscale, features themes including reflecting on strengths and weakness, altering approaches to study, seeking help, support and encouragement, monitoring effort and achievements and administering rewards and punishments (Cassidy, 2016). Item examples include, “I would try to think more about my strengths and weaknesses to help me work better,” and “I would start to self-impose rewards and punishments depending on my performance.” Finally, the negative affect and emotional response subscale features themes including anxiety, catastrophizing, avoiding negative emotional responses, optimism and hopelessness (Cassidy, 2016). Item examples include “I would begin to think my chances of success at university were poor,” and “I would feel like everything was ruined and was going wrong.”

Internal reliability estimates of the scores range from .85 to .89 (Cassidy, 2016). Using a sample of 435 British students, Cassidy (2016) conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which supported retention of three factors: (a) perseverance, (b) reflecting and adaptive help-seeking, and (c) negative affect and emotional response. The emerging factors accounted for a total of 42.4% of variance in academic resilience scores; perseverance for 27% of variance; reflecting and adaptive-help-seeking for 9.1% of variance; and negative affect and emotional response accounting for 5.5% of variance. To establish concurrent validity, Cassidy (2016) utilized the General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (GASE; Cassidy & Eachus, 2002); There was a statistically significant positive correlation between ARS-30 scores and GASE scores ($r = .49$).
The discriminant validity of the scale was supported by statistically significant mean differences and large effect size (d = .98) in ASR-30 responses to two independent versions of the academic adversity vignette (p < .001), which was not explained by group differences in academic self-efficacy (p > .05; Cassidy, 2016).

Approval was sought and received from the author of the ARS-30 to utilize the instrument in this study (see Appendix E).

**Procedures**

Demographics, SES, and ARS-30 data were collected online from the participants using Qualtrics survey software. Emails were sent out in February of 2019 to multiple offices within the selected university that requested to send survey email out to Black males on their listservs. These offices included but were not limited to Student Success Services, Academic Advising, Diversity and Inclusion, Diversity and Community Outreach Services, Trio Program, University Recreation Programs, The Black Student Union, and the Young Black Males Support Network. Potential participants received an email that (a) described the study and its potential benefits, (b) clearly stated that responses would be anonymous, (c) described what participation would entail, (d) requested recipient’s participation, (d) included a link to the survey. Additionally, the email described an incentive for participation consisting of a $25 raffle for all participants who left an email at the end of the survey. To ensure confidentiality on the survey, participants were protected by numerically coded questionnaires and the responses were kept confidential. The coding was completed automatically by the Qualtrics survey software. Data was collected over a period of 13 months. It took respondents approximately 15 minutes to complete the surveys. Measures were presented in the following order: (a) Demographic Questionnaire, (b) ARS-30, and (c) SES.
Data Analysis

Consistently characterized in education scholarship as an “at risk” population Black men have been the focus of many peer-reviewed articles, books, national reports, and dissertations (Harper, 2014). Instead of concentrating on the factors which are to the deficit of Black male collegiate achievement, the purpose of this study is to investigate factors that contribute to their success. This study seeks to fill the gap and provide evidence for Black male resilience and academic achievement from an anti-deficit approach. As such, this study focuses on academic resilience and student engagement as predictors of academic achievement for Black men attending a PWI. The following statistical analyses will be utilized to guide this study.

A chi-square test was calculated to determine if any association exists between participants’ demographic variables (age, ethnicity, class level, socioeconomic status, high school GPA, degree aspiration, mother highest education, and father highest education) and academic achievement. A chi-square test is designed to analyze categorical data. That means that the data has been counted and divided into categories. Allen (1992) utilized bivariate correlation to compare demographic variables to his dependent variable (academic achievement) instead because his data was continuous (numerical) and not categorical. This study provided categories to respondents to reduce the risk of overreporting that would skew the results of the data (Cassady, 2000). A chi-square test is designed to convey information based on how to divide the data; however, it cannot tell whether the categories are meaningful (Frank et. al, 2011). In this study a chi-square test was utilized due to the data being in categories and to compare the demographic variables to the dependent variable (academic achievement).

Research question one seeks to explore the nature of the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement among Black males at Midwestern PWIs by utilizing a
Pearson bivariate correlation. A Pearson bivariate correlation is a statistical technique that is used to determine the presence of relationships between two different variables (i.e., X and Y) (Allen, 2017). In this case, it would calculate how much X would change when there is a change in Y. It should be noted that correlation is not to be confused with causation. A correlation will show if there is a relationship but does not indicate the cause of the relationship (Allen, 2017).

In his review concerning the construct validity of measures of academic resilience (Tudor & Spray, 2017) noted the importance of the development of future academic resilience scales be distinguished from other related concepts of resilience. Therefore, my first research question is to understand the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement through correlational analysis.

As mentioned prior, no other research has explored the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement in a sample of Black men; thus, no other research has explored how these variables interact. This question is critical as to the strength and direction of the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement. If there is a negative relationship, then it can be argued that an increase in one, could lead to a decrease in the other. This would indicate that either academic resilience or student engagement would be a negative factor in Black males persevering at a PWI. However, if both variables work in the same direction, it will provide more strength in the relationship and positive factors that Black males can harness to achieve success in college. The goal of this is to show that these two positive factors work together in the eventual success of Black males at a PWI.

Research question two asks if academic resilience predicts academic achievement for this sample of Black men. Similarly, research question three, seeks to determine if student engagement predicts academic resilience for this sample of Black men. Finally, research question
four asks whether academic resilience predicts academic achievement above student engagement. Each of these questions utilize the logistic regression model. Linear regression is a statistical method utilized to explain the relationship between a dependent variable (outcome) and one or more explanatory variables (predictors) (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2010). The predictors in linear regression must be continuous or numerical. Logistic regression is similar in that it can be utilized to predict the relationship between variables; however, logistic regression predicts the relationship while providing an odds ratio (logic) of the chances of the relationship happening (Sharma, 1996). (i.e., X has a 34% chance of predicting Y). The predictors in logistic regression must be categorical or two different categories (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2010).

This method was chosen due to high likelihood of students overreporting their GPA. Prior studies have shown that student tend to overreport their GPAs and this, in turn, results in skewed data sets that are not necessarily representative of the sample (Cassady, 2000). By utilizing a GPA as a dichotomous variable, it decreases the chance of student’s overreporting GPA and minimizing the robustness of the data. To examine academic achievement among Black males, logistic regression was utilized to determine the probability of students obtaining a GPA or 3.5 or higher. Since Western Michigan University utilizes a GPA of 3.5 or higher as honors, this dependent variable was categorized and coded dichotomously (High GPA = 3.5 or above, Not High = 3.49 or below). In the dataset, all students who earned a GPA of 3.49 or below were coded “0,” while students who earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher were coded “1.”

**Summary**

This chapter of the current study provided an overview of the manner of approval for the study, participants in the study, measures that were utilized, the procedures, and the statistical analyses that were undertaken to address the research questions and hypotheses. Additionally, an
explanation was offered to support the method of statistical analyses that were performed. The following chapter, Results, will provide an overview of the cases that were deleted from the sample, preliminary data on the demographic participants provided, descriptive statistics of the measure selected, and answers the research questions mentioned above.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter describes and summarizes the statistical analyses used to evaluate the research questions and hypotheses established in the previous chapters. Subsequent to the data screening process, this chapter reports the results of the cases that were deleted and the demographics of the participants in the sample. Next, the results of the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement are reported. Then, the results of the logistic regression of academic resilience and academic achievement and student and academic achievement will be reported. Finally, the results of the best predictor of achievement between academic resilience and student engagement will be reported.

Preliminary Data Analysis

There was a total of 124 participants who accessed the survey. Two cases were deleted because they did not agree to participate in the survey after reading the informed consent. Three more cases were deleted because they agreed to participate, but did not answer any of the questions, including demographics. Fifteen more cases were deleted; after agreement to participate, and answering demographics, these participants did not answer a single survey item from the SES or ARS-30. This process resulted in a sample of 104 participants. Seven more cases were deleted as they completed the demographics questions but did not complete any of the ARS-30 or SES items, which made the final sample size 97.

The sample contained 97 participants who identified as male. In terms of age, 84 (86.6%) were between the ages of 18–24, 12 (12.4%) from 25–34, and 1 (1.0%) was 35 or older. For
ethnicity, 5.2% identified as African, 73.2% as African American, 2.1% as West Indian/Caribbean Black, 17.5% as Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial, and 2.1% as Other. For class level, 18.6% identified as freshman, 35.1% as sophomore, 28.9% as junior, and 17.5% as senior or above. For SES, 11.3% indicated $25,000–$34,999, 40.2% indicated $35,000–$49,999, 36.1% indicated $50,000–$74,999, 11.3% indicated $75,000–$99,999, and 1.0% indicated $100,000–$149,999. For GPA, 1.0–2.4 (16.5%), 2.5–3.4 (54.6%), 3.5–3.9 (25.8%), and 4.00 or above (3.1%). For high school GPA, 1.0–2.4 (11.3%), 2.5–3.4 (45.4%), 3.5–3.9 (33.0%), and 4.00 or above (10.3%). Ultimate degree aspirations were bachelors (66.0%), master’s (23.7%), and doctorate (10.3%). Post undergraduate aspirations were to enroll in grad school (22.7%), work full-time (63.9%), and unsure was (13.9%). Mother’s highest education was high school diploma (12.4%), some college (22.7%), associate’s degree (7.2%), bachelor’s degree (32%), master’s degree (13.4%), doctorate (4.1%), and N/A (8.2%). Father’s highest education was high school diploma (18.6%), some college (14.4%), associate’s degree (6.2%), bachelor’s degree (14.4%), master’s degree (8.2%), doctorate (3.1%), and N/A (35.1%).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics—including means, standard deviations, ranges, reliability estimates of the scores (on scales for which item-level data were available), and correlations—are presented in Table 1. All descriptive statistics were calculated based on the unweighted data. Total academic resilience (AR) scores ranged from 53–95 (M = 70.86; SD = 9.19). The perseverance subscale scores ranged 22–43 (M = 31.77, SD = 4.40), the reflecting and adaptive help seeking subscale scores ranged from 9–31 (M = 15.71, SD = 5.61), and negative affect and emotional response scores ranged from 11–31 (M = 23.37, SD = 4.02). Internal consistency was then examined for each scale using Cronbach’s alpha for overall and subscale scores. The overall AR scores had an
\( \alpha = .652 \) indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency (i.e., between .60–.70; DeVellis, 2017). Inter-item correlations ranged from \(|.715|\) (“I would give myself encouragement” with “I would stop myself from panicking”) and \(|.000|\) (“I would look forward to showing that I can improve my grades” with “I would seek help from my tutors”). Alpha for AR subscale scores ranged from \(\alpha = .404\) (negative affect and emotional response) to \(\alpha = .796\) (reflecting and adaptive help-seeking; perseverance \(\alpha = .442\) with inter-item correlations ranging from \(|.009|\) to \(|.529|\); reflecting and adaptive help seeking \(\alpha = .796\) with inter-item correlations ranging from \(|.004|\) to \(|.655|\); and \(\alpha\) negative affect and emotional response = .404 with inter-item correlations ranging from \(|.019|\) to \(|.499|\)). Table 1 presents mean and standard deviation of all ARS-30 scores by measure. For each measure, the score represents the summation of responses with higher scores reflecting more adaptive responses for each measure.

Table 1

**Mean and Standard Deviation ARS-30 Scores by Measure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22–43</td>
<td>31.77</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective and adaptive help-seeking</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9–32</td>
<td>15.71</td>
<td>5.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect and emotional response</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11–31</td>
<td>23.37</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total student engagement (SE) scores along with SE subscale scores were then calculated for each participant. Overall SE scores ranged from 42–160 (\(M = 88.19; SD = 23.87\)). The valuing (psychological engagement I) subscale scores ranged from 3–13 (\(M = 4.04, SD = 2.09\)), sense of belonging (psychological engagement II) subscale scores ranged from 9–43 (\(M = 25.51, SD = 4.99\)).
SD = 8.36), cognitive engagement subscale scores ranged from 9–42 (M = 15.77, SD = 6.15), peer engagement (emotional engagement I) subscale scores ranged from 5–25 (M = 8.94, SD = 4.53), relationships with faculty (emotional engagement II) subscale scores range from 8–40 (M = 23.86, SD = 8.38), and behavioral engagement subscale scores ranged from 6–23 (M = 12.07, SD = 3.94). Cronbach’s alpha for overall SE scores was .931 indicating a strong level of internal consistency (i.e., between .70–95; DeVellis, 2017); inter-item correlations ranged from |.002| (“My teachers behave fairly to all my friends” and “I try to do my homework in the best way”) |.894| (“I look forward to going to campus” with “I like spending time on campus). Alpha for SE subscale scores ranged from α = .852 (peer engagement) to α = .934 (valuing); α valuing (psychological engagement I) = .934 with inter-item correlations ranging from |.806| to |.881|; α sense of belonging (psychological engagement II) = .889 with inter-item correlations ranging from |.092| to |.894|; α cognitive engagement = .854 with inter-item correlations ranging from |.094| to |.749|; α peer engagement (emotional engagement I) = .852 ranging from |.286| to |.780|; α relationships with faculty (emotional engagement II) = .909 with inter-item correlations ranging from |.336| to |.846|; and α behavioral engagement = .695 with inter-item correlations ranging from |.025| to |.643|. Table 2 presents mean and standard deviation of all SES scores by measure. For each measure, the score represents the summation of responses with higher scores reflecting higher engagement responses for each measure.
Table 2

*Mean and Standard Deviation SES Scores by Measure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Engagement I: Valuing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3–13</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Engagement II: Sense of belongingness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9–43</td>
<td>23.51</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Engagement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9–42</td>
<td>15.77</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Engagement I: Peer relationships</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5–25</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Engagement II: Faculty relationships</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8–40</td>
<td>23.86</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Engagement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6–23</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data were assessed for assumptions of normality and linearity, which were met, with all data being linear, no skew values exceeding 2, and no kurtosis values exceeding 7 (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The univariate skewness of the AR scores was .384 and univariate kurtosis for AR was -.103. The univariate skewness of the SE scores was .433 and univariate kurtosis for SE was .018. Using the general rule of thumb of skewness is between -0.5 and 0.5 (DeVellis, 2017), the distribution of scores was determined to be approximately symmetric. Standardized scores (z-scores) were calculated for AR and SE scores, scores ranged from 2.62 to -1.94 for AR scores and 3.00 to -1.93 for SE scores. A normal probability plot also indicated normality due to a lack of deviation of scores from the diagonal line.

A chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between age and academic achievement, $X^2 (2, N = 97) = 2.56, p = .28$. Academic achievement did not differ by ethnicity, $X^2 (4, N = 97) = 3.86, p = .43$. There was no significant association
between class level and academic achievement, \(X^2 (3, N = 97) = 2.88, p = .41\). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement did not have a significant association, \(X^2 (4, N = 97) = 3.31, p = .51\). There is a significant relationship between high school GPA and academic achievement, \(X^2 (3, N = 97) = 40.04, p < 0.001\). Men in this sample who earned a high school GPA of 3.5 or higher were more likely to obtain academic achievement in college. There is a significant relationship between ultimate degree aspiration and academic achievement, \(X^2 (2, N = 97) = 20.57, p < 0.001\). Men who plan to attend graduate school were more likely to obtain academic achievement in college. There is a significant relationship between post-undergraduate aspirations and academic achievement, \(X^2 (2, N = 97) = 9.41, p = .009\). Black men who planned to have a career after college or attend graduate school were more likely to obtain academic achievement. There was no significant association between mother’s highest education and academic achievement \(X^2 (6, N = 97) = 5.26, p = .51\), or father’s highest education and academic achievement \(X^2 (6, N = 97) = 12.32, p = .06\).

**Hypothesis Testing**

**Research Question 1**

What is the nature of the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement among Black males at Midwestern PWIs?

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant positive relationship between academic resilience and student engagement among Black males at a Midwestern PWI.

Using a Pearson bivariate correlation, the correlation between AR scores and SES scores was \(r = .475\) (p < .000) which indicates a moderate positive correlation. Thus, Black male students who had higher levels of SE also had higher levels of AR (see Table 3). This does not indicate a causal relationship; rather, it explains that total AR and SE scores move together.
Table 3

Summary of Pearson’s Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, Range, Skew, and Kurtosis for Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. AR Scores</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. AR Per</td>
<td>0.72**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. AR Ref Help</td>
<td>0.80**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. AR NegAff Emo Resp</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SEScores</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.55**</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SE PsycEng1 Valuing</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SE PsycEng2 Belong</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.77**</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. SE CogEng</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.71**</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. SE EmoEng1 Peer</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. SE EmoEng2 Faculty</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.78**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.56**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. SE BehEng</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.75**</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skew</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kurtosis</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* **p < .01, *p < .05
An examination of the strongest relationships amongst scores at the subscale level will provide more insight. The subscale SE PsycEng1 Valuing was found to have a moderate positive correlation with AR Per \((r = .341, p < .000)\). This would indicate that as students’ value of their education increased, so did their perseverance in the face of difficulty. The subscale SE PsycEng1 Valuing was also found to have a moderate positive correlation with AR Ref Help \((r = .372, p < .000)\). This would indicate that students’ value of their education increased with their ability to reflect on their strengths and seek help when needed. Interestingly, there were no correlations found between the SE PsycEng2 Belong subscale and AR subscales. This could indicate that a student’s sense of belonging had no effect on their academic resilience.

The correlation between SE CogEng and AR Per was \(r = .361\) \((p < .000)\) which indicates a moderate positive correlation. This signifies that these students’ approach to their learning increases as does their perseverance at times of academic difficulty. Additionally, the relationship between SE CogEng and AR Ref Help was found to have a moderate positive correlation as \(r = .500\) \((p < .000)\). This indicates that these students’ approach to their own learning increases with their ability alter their approach to studying and help-seeking behaviors.

The subscale SE EmoEng1 Peer was found to have a moderate positive correlation with AR Per \((r = .259, p < .000)\). This indicates that as students’ relationship with their peers increased so did their ability to persevere during academic difficulties. SE EmoEng1 Peer was also found to have a moderate positive correlation with AR Ref Help \((r = .384, p < .000)\). This signifies that students’ relationships with peers increase along with their ability to accept support and encouragement, possibly from those same peers.

The relationship between SE EmoEng2 Faculty and AR Ref Help was \(r = .333\) \((p < .000)\) which indicates a moderate positive correlation. This shows that as students increased their
relationship with faculty, they had an increased ability to monitor their efforts and seek-help, possibly from those faculty with whom they have a relationship. Additionally, SE BehEng was found to have a moderate positive correlation with AR Ref Help ($r = .445, p < .000$). This indicates that as student’s participation and attendance in class activities increased, so did their ability to monitor their efforts and achievements. Finally, it should be noted that the AR NegAff Emo Resp subscale was not found to have any correlations with the SE subscales. This may indicate that students who suffer with anxiety, feel hopeless, or catastrophize academic concerns may be less like to convey behaviors of engagement with their universities, peers, or faculty.

**Research Question 2**

Does academic resilience predict academic achievement among Black males at a Midwestern PWI?

Hypothesis 2: Academic resilience will predict academic achievement among Black males.

Logistic regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the extent to which AR predicts academic achievement among Black males at Midwestern PWIs, with the dichotomized version of academic achievement included as the dependent variable, and the three separate factors of AR (perseverance, reflecting, and adaptive help-seeking, and negative affect and emotional response) included as the independent variables in this analysis. Table 4 presents the results of this analysis using the Wald $\chi^2$ statistic. As shown, perseverance was the only statistically significant factor in predicting the odds of academic achievement $1.132 (p < .05)$. For every one unit increase in perseverance, the chances of attaining academic achievement increase by 13.2%. In other words, the chances of Black males attaining high academic achievement increased by 13% as the strengthen their abilities to persist through adversity, and practice self-discipline. As
noted, reflecting and adaptive help-seeking behaviors and negative affect and emotional response were not found to be statistically significant predictors of academic achievement. It is possible that these were not found significant due to the nature of autonomy of Black men in PWIs. For instance, perseverance typifies resilience in an independent fashion; working hard, trying harder, and thinking of way to improve work. However, reflecting on weaknesses and seeking support can require a reliance on others to provide support. Black males in this sample may not trust the support offered by other individuals at PWIs.

Table 4

*Logistic Regression Results: Academic Resilience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>B (SE)</th>
<th>Wald $\chi^2$</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% for OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR: Per.</td>
<td>-.124 (.056)</td>
<td>4.833*</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR: Ref. Help</td>
<td>-.039 (.028)</td>
<td>1.835</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR: Neg. Aff.: Emo. Resp.</td>
<td>.026 (.058)</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>1.027</td>
<td>1.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.062 (2.255)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1.064</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *$p<.05$, ^$p<.10; df = 1 for all independent variables.*

**Research Question 3**

Does student engagement predict academic achievement among Black males?

Hypothesis 3: Student engagement will predict academic achievement among Black males.

Logistic regression was used to examine the six factors of SE (valuing [psychological engagement I], sense of belonging [psychological engagement II], cognitive engagement, peer relationships [emotional engagement I], relationships with faculty [emotional engagement II], and behavioral engagement) in their prediction of academic achievement in this analysis. Table 5
reports the results of this analysis using the Wald \( \chi^2 \) statistic, of individual predictors in the mode. Among SE independent variables, valuing (Psychological Engagement I [SE: Psyc. Eng. 1: Valuing]) was statistically significant in predicting the odds of high academic achievement \( .584 \) \((p < .05)\). A one unit increase in SE: Psyc. Eng. 1: Valuing was associated with an odds of academic achievement that was reduced by a factor of .584. Thus, for each one unit increase in Valuing, the chances of attaining high academic achievement are increased by approximately 58.4\%. Peer relationships (emotional engagement I [SE: Emo. Eng. 1: Peer]), was also statistically significant in predicting the odds of high academic achievement \(1.144 \) \((^\text{p} < .10)\). A one unit increase in SE: Emo. Eng. 1: Peer was associated with an odds of academic achievement that was increased by a factor of 1.144. Thus, for each one unit increase in peer relationships, the chances of attaining high academic achievement are increased by approximately 14.4\%.

Table 5

**Logistic Regression Results: Student Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>B  (SE)</th>
<th>Wald ( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% for OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE: Psyc. Eng. 1: Valuing</td>
<td>-.538 (.242)</td>
<td>4.942*</td>
<td>.584</td>
<td>.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE: Psyc. Eng. 2: Sense of Being</td>
<td>.043 (.038)</td>
<td>1.278</td>
<td>1.044</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE: Cog. Eng.</td>
<td>.009 (.053)</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE: Emo. Eng. 1: Peer</td>
<td>.134 (.071)</td>
<td>3.581^</td>
<td>1.144</td>
<td>.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE: Emo. Eng 2: Faculty</td>
<td>-.017 (.048)</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.983</td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE: Beh. Eng.</td>
<td>-.111 (.099)</td>
<td>1.254</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.443 (1.021)</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>1.557</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *\( p < .05\), ^\( p < .10\); df = 1 for all independent variables.*
Research Question 4

Does academic resilience better predict academic achievement above student engagement among Black males?

Hypothesis 4: Academic resilience will predict academic outcomes above and beyond student engagement among Black males.

To answer this research question, a logistic regression was run which included total AR and SE scores as predictors in these analyses. Table 6 presents the results using the Wald $\chi^2$ statistic. These results did not find either AR or SE total scores to significantly predict the outcome, academic achievement. This indicates that AR and SE together do not predict academic achievement among Black males at this Midwestern PWI. It is important to explore why neither AR nor SE were found significant within this question. When combined, AR and SE scores display the whole part of constructs that are best explored by subscale. For instance, if student’s in this sample typically displayed higher levels of academic resilience within AR Ref Help subscale, than they did in the AR Per subscale, it would be incorrect to conclude they are not academically resilient. Although their AR score would be important for interpretation of the overall level of resilience, it does not illuminate the full scope of their academic resilience in a compartmentalized approach. The same would be true of SE scores as it does not compartmentalize scores on the subscale level. For the purposes of this research, it would be more appropriate to discuss the interpretations of questions 2 and 3 as they are viewed within the subscale level.
Table 6

Logistic Regression Results: Academic Resilience

| Measure  | $B$ (SE) | Wald $\chi^2$ | OR Lower | OR Upper | 95% for OR  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARScore</td>
<td>-.039 (.029)</td>
<td>1.790</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>1.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEScore</td>
<td>.002 (.011)</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>1.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.653 (1.819)</td>
<td>.826</td>
<td>5.221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *$p < .05$, ^$p < .10$; $df = 1$ for all independent variables.

Summary

This chapter of the current study provided the statistical analyses used to evaluate the research questions and hypotheses established in the previous chapters. For review, the following significant results found will be discussed for each research question. For research question one, the correlation between AR scores and SES scores indicated a moderate positive correlation. Thus, Black male students who had higher levels of SE also had higher levels of AR and the hypothesis was supported. For research question 2, perseverance was the only statistically significant factor in predicting the odds of academic achievement; thus, the chances of Black males graduating from college increase by 13% as they strengthen their abilities to persist through adversity, and practice self-discipline. For research question 3, valuing was statistically significant in predicting the odds of high academic achievement; thus, for each one unit increase in Valuing, the chances of attaining high academic achievement are increased by approximately 58.4%. Also, Peer relationships was also statistically significant in predicting the odds of high academic achievement; thus, for each one unit increase in peer relationships, the chances of attaining high academic achievement are increased by approximately 14.4%. For research
question 4, AR and SE total scores did not predict the outcome, academic achievement; this indicated that AR and SE together do not predict academic achievement among Black males at this Midwestern PWI.

The next chapter, Discussion, will provide an overview of the current study and discuss the implications of the results presented in the current chapter. The findings of the main and supplemental analyses will be discussed in references to the findings and their convergence or divergence with previous literature. Finally, limitations of the study will be addressed, followed by implications for practice and universities, and suggestions for future directions for the study of Black men attending PWIs.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to use an anti-deficit approach to measure Black male academic achievement in PWIs. The relationship between academic resilience, student engagement, and demographic variables’ influence on Black male academic achievement has not been examined quantitively. As such, this study examined the predictive nature of academic resilience as measured by the ARS-30 (Cassidy, 2016) and student engagement as measured by the SES (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014), and on academic achievement as measured by GPA. A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between demographic variables (age, ethnicity, class level, socioeconomic status, high school GPA, degree aspiration, post-undergrad aspirations, mother highest education, and father highest education) and academic achievement. Four hypotheses were tested; three hypotheses were supported, and one was not. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 tested whether a positive relationship existed between academic resilience and student engagement and was supported. Hypothesis 2 tested whether academic resilience predicted academic achievement and was supported. Hypothesis 3 tested whether student engagement predicted academic achievement and was supported. Hypothesis 4 examined whether academic resilience was a better predictor of academic achievement than student engagement and was not supported. The findings, limitations, implications for practice, implications for universities, and future directions are discussed in this chapter.
Relationship of Academic Resilience and Student Engagement

The findings of this study indicated that there is a positive relationship between academic resilience and student engagement $r = .475$ ($p < .000$). Therefore, as academic resilience increases, so does student engagement and vice versa for Black men in this study. Studies have shown that academic resilience and student engagement alone can lead to better educational outcomes; however, no other study has investigated the relationship of academic resilience and student engagement together as it pertains to Black men. This finding is also important in that certain aspects of academic resilience are also measured by student engagement, which made it difficult in the past to decipher variance between the two. Therefore, this study correlated each of the factors from the ARS-30 (3 factors) and the SES (6 factors) to determine where the overlap existed (as shown in Table 3). The contribution of student engagement and academic resilience are statistically significant in consideration of Black male academic achievement in this sample.

Academic Resilience on Academic Achievement

There are three subscales of academic resilience in the ARS-30 (perseverance, reflecting and adaptive help-seeking, and negative affect and emotional response) that were examined. The findings indicated that the academic resilience subscale of perseverance, as measured by the ARS-30, is a statistically significant predictor of academic achievement. This finding is consistent with what was expected in prior research (Braxton et al., 2004; Harper, 2007, 2012). Although the other two subscales were not statistically significant, it does not suggest that the Black men in this study did not attain academic achievement or academic resilience. As it pertains to the current study, 30% of the Black men in the sample attained academic achievement (GPA of 3.5 or above). When the subscales of the ARS-30 were examined, it revealed that Black men in this study
scored high on perseverance \((M = 31.77, SD = 4.40)\), and negative affect and emotional response \((M = 23.37, SD = 4.02)\). There will be a discussion concerning each of the subscales below.

**Perseverance**

Scores on the perseverance subscale implied that Black men work harder, keep trying, and motivate themselves to continue to persist at the PWI. As described earlier, Black males are often negatively categorized in both academic and social settings during college. The threatening PWI environment, which exemplifies stereotypes, have a negative effect on Black males’ academic success and persistence while enrolled at a college or university. Harper (2006) states Black males are consistently overlooked, undermined, and stereotyped by the predominantly White majority as uneducated, lazy, and violent. Consequently, these real or perceived threats, can contribute to lower levels of academic performance among Black males in PWI environments. Alternatively, this study has shown that Black males in this sample utilize resilience to persevere in college in spite of facing those aforementioned stereotypes.

Much like the Black men in Johnson’s (2016) qualitative study, these men displayed their ability to persevere and be ‘somebody’ through the pressures they face to get ahead. In his study of ‘somebodies’, Johnson (2016) stated that the Black men he interviewed, “spoke of the internal and external pressures to get ahead at all costs. In their yearning for success, the men had sometimes adopted values, relationships, and lifestyles that were alien to themselves and their cultural group” (p. 340). It is evident through the literature that a PWI environment can be perceived as alien to Black men who typically come from areas with a tradition of Black culture, values, and practices.
Negative Affect and Emotional Response

Scores on the negative affect and emotional response subscale implied that these men combat anxiety and catastrophizing by maintaining composure with hope that they can overcome academic concerns. This anxiety stems from being in environments where Black males feel marginalized and threatened. They may experience an array of emotions and feelings, which could include shock, confusion, surprise, anxiety, anger, vulnerability, or fear (Harper, 2015). This array of feelings is an example of Black males’ tendency to internalize feelings and emotions, because it may be risky to respond to those threats or microaggressions. This internalization may also stem from instances of what McGee and Martin (2011) refer to as racial battle fatigue, when minority students are exhausted from monitoring others’ racial ignorance. For instance, when subtle racial slurs or microaggressions occur, it is typically the oppressed student that has to bring awareness to the racial undertone of the comment or remark made. It is a credit to the Black men in this sample that they are able to understand how to maintain composure and cope with the stressors which accompany being on a PWI campus.

Reflecting and Adaptive Help-Seeking

The subscale reflecting and adaptive help seeking also had high scores ($M = 15.71, SD = 5.61$); scores on this subscale could indicate that Black men in this study leverage faculty or seek help from the institution to contest academic concerns. This is not unusual as other studies have shown Black men are likely to seek help at PWIs (Harper, 2007, 2009). Mentors and significant figures such as faculty and staff members at colleges and universities are crucial to student’s academic success (Harper, 2015). It is noted that the majority of PWI faculty population is more representative of the student population, which typically leave Black men at PWIs with a limited
number of significant figures to seek out help or support during their academic tenure. However, if the university shows a concerted effort to create specialized programs, campus/community groups/organizations and Black male leadership programs, it will directly impact students’ engagement with the campus faculty. This could be a crucial reason why the Black men in this sample had high scores in reflective and adaptive help-seeking as some were members of such organizations and programs.

**Student Engagement on Academic Achievement**

The findings indicated that student engagement, as measured by the SES, is a statistically significant predictor of academic achievement. Specifically, there are six subscales of student engagement in the SES; of the six subscales, two were found to be statistically significant. Scores on the valuing (Psychological engagement I) subscale were shown to have higher odds of predicting academic achievement; this indicated that men who value their education at this PWI have a higher chance of attaining academic achievement. Students’ valuing of their education has been shown to increase the odds of persisting in college (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2012). There will be a discussion concerning each of the subscales below.

**Valuing and Sense of Belonging: Psychological Engagement**

A deeper examination of the student engagement subscales reveals how Black men used engagement to persist and attain academic achievement. For instance, valuing and sense of belonging were both part of the same measures of psychological engagement; however, only valuing emerged as a statistically significant predictor of academic achievement. This is not consistent with prior research where sense of belonging was also significant (Harper, 2007, 2009; Strayhorn, 2008). In fact, 47% of the men in this study endorsed an SES item that stated they do not feel themselves as a part of the campus (as compared to 32% who agreed and 21%
who were neutral). This begs to question why students in this sample did not feel a sense of belonging on this PWI campus.

Students’ sense of belonging has been shown as a significant indicator of persistence and success among all college students (Harper, 2015; Fleming, 1984; Goodenow, 1992). Harper (2015) contended that learning is done by individuals within an organizational setting such as a college or university, and that organizational cultures can promote or hinder individual learning. In another study, Hunn (2014) revealed that many Black students primarily are from Black neighborhoods, worship at Black churches, and typically socialize in groups of Black people. When these Black students attend PWIs, they often feel the need to withdraw or isolate themselves due to the vast difference in environments which they are accustomed to. It should also be noted that the racial climates of many PWIs was just as hostile as the political climate during the time this sample’s data was collected in 2018 and 2019.

Policies which protected college students from lower SES homes (such as most Black students) were dismantled, making it more difficult for student loans to be forgiven and harder for those who had loans to repay them in the future (Miller, 2020). These policies would make it more difficult for Black men to afford staying in college. Also, during this period of time the U.S. was at one of its most pressing sociopolitical racial divides as protests erupted concerning the policing and killing of Black people including Stephon Clark, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery. PWIs’ responses to these protests and the mistreatment of Black people over the history of the U.S. may not have been perceived as acceptable or understood by Black males in this sample. As it is important not to generalize this to the experience of all Black men, it is justified as the faces of those affected mirrored the faces of Black men on PWI campuses.
Moreover, additional institutional factors related to underrepresented faculty and staff of color have the potential to contribute to Black males’ sense of belonging at this PWI.

**Cognitive Engagement**

Cognitive engagement was also not a significant predictor of academic achievement for Black men in this sample. Cognitive engagement in the classroom can be characterized as a psychological state in which students put in a lot of effort to truly understand a topic and in which students persist studying over a long period of time (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015). Essentially, it involves how these Black men motivated themselves, determined goals, prepared for class, completed assignments, and how they perceived the importance of what they learned in class. As described by Gunuc and Kuzu, 2015, cognitive engagement is relatively dependent on the task which determines the extent of students’ autonomy. For example, being cognitively engaged in group activity would not require less effort as would being cognitively engaged in independent homework assignment. As such, it would be beneficial to view cognitive engagement along with peer engagement. It could be argued that students who are more engaged with their peers (such as the Black men in this sample) may show lower levels of cognitive engagement.

**Relationships with Peers and Relationships with Faculty: Emotional Engagement**

Relationships with peers and relationships with faculty combine to represent emotional engagement; however, only relationships with peers emerged as statistically significant in prediction of academic achievement. Both relationships with peers and faculty have been shown to increase academic achievement and engagement (Flowers, 2012; Harper, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008). Scores on the peer engagement (emotional engagement I) subscale were shown to have higher odds of predicting academic achievement; this indicated that men who engage in peer relationships have a high chance of attaining academic achievement. Learning and leaning on
peers for emotional well-being has been shown to positively impact college performance (Allen, 1992; Crosnoe & Elder, 2004; Harper, 2007, 2009, 2012). Additionally, Harper (2006) found that peer support was an indicator of success among Black male college students. Black males in his study reported their peers provided them with leverage and support in times of need, advancement, and achievement in their collegiate endeavors. The Black males in this sample exemplified those seen in Harper’s (2006) study as the leveraged their peers in order to maintain and persist at this PWI.

It is important to consider that 52% of the Black men in this study endorsed an SES item that stated they do not agree that professors are there when they need them (as compared to 25% who do agree and 22% who were neutral). There could be a number of reasons why this occurred within this sample such as the dearth of Black male professors at PWIs, marginalization, or exclusion of the experience of people of color in course curriculum. Changes shown in the higher education student population are evidence of the growing need for a more diverse faculty, but faculty diversity has not changed with the pace of the student population. In fall 2018, of the 1.5 million faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 54 percent were full time and 46 percent were part time (faculty include professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, assisting professors, adjunct professors, and interim professors) (NCES, 2020). Of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2018, 40 percent were White males; 35 percent were White females; 7 and 3 percent each were Black males, Black females (including Hispanic males, and Hispanic females) (NCES, 2020c).

Hiring faculty of color, particularly Black faculty, is critical for universities to fulfill the needs of the Black students on campus. Faculty of color have a deeper understanding of the experiences of racism, microaggression, and oppressions faced by student of color at PWIs.
Faculty of color also provide students with diverse role models, can provide effective mentoring of Black students, and are supportive of nontraditional and racially diverse areas of scholarship. Antonio (2002) surveyed 21,467 full-time undergraduate faculty from 313 four-year institutions and found that faculty of color demonstrated values that reflected a scholarship of teaching, with an emphasis on learning, and application more than White faculty. He also found that faculty of color also were more likely than White faculty to place importance on students’ affective, moral, and civic development (Antonio, 2002). Guiffrida (2005) found that Black students intentionally seek out faculty of color due to initial comfort and their inherent belief that faculty and of color have the ability to satisfy their desire to feel connected to the campus. Those relationships can result in mentorships that increase the retention of Black students at PWIs.

Curriculums in schools all over the U.S. are another representation of White Eurocentric perspective, and this includes the courses offered at PWIs. Quaye et al. (2015), state that coursework that is culturally inclusive and culturally competent, increases the probability of engagement among students of color in the classroom. In fact, PWIs can increase multicultural competency among all students by inspiring them to enroll in courses that are diverse and non-Eurocentric. This contributes to the need for professors to purposefully integrate readings and curriculum that reflect the experiences of students of color. By introducing culturally relative material in classroom curriculum, professors and the institution are promoting and creating a more inclusive campus racial climate.

**Academic Resilience and Student Engagement on Academic Achievement**

The findings indicated that when ARS-30 total scores (included with all 3 subscales) and SES total scores (included with all 6 subscales) are examined for what combinations best predict academic achievement, neither score in total is statistically significant. The results were contrary
to what was expected; it was hypothesized that higher scores on academic resilience would be a better predictor of academic achievement than student engagement scores. This was hypothesized as academic resilience pertains to the nature of personal characteristics with individuals, as opposed to student engagement which includes environmental factors that can be unpredictable.

The nature of the findings can be explained through a closer examination of the overall AR and SE scores.

Academic resilience and student engagement are two constructs that include many subfactors. For instance, this study utilized the ARS-30 to measure academic resilience which has three separate subscales (perseverance, reflective and adaptive help-seeking, and negative affect and emotional response). Students who scored high on the scales overall can be categorized as having higher academic resilience. However, to compare one student’s ARS-30 scores to another’s would be inconsequential. This is due to the fact that the overall ARS-30 scores do not magnify the importance of the subscale scores, which provide more information as to how the student utilizes academic resilience. Furthermore, AR scores ranged from 53–95 ($M = 70.86$) which indicated that most Black men in this sample were, in fact, academically resilient. The same can be said of student engagement as measures by the SES. Information from the SES is more accurately examined through exploration of the subscales, instead of the overall SES scores.

Additionally, the logistic regression analysis is sensitive to smaller sample sizes. In all, there were 104 Black men who completed the entire survey. Due to the small size, the effect of AR scores and SES scores would not be as significant when combined. However, this did not have any effect on the analysis of subscales within AR and SES. Therefore, it is most useful to explore the interpretation of these results in research questions two and three.
Demographic Variables on Academic Achievement

A chi-square test was calculated to determine if any association exists between participants’ demographic variables (age, ethnicity, class level, socioeconomic status, high school GPA, degree aspiration, mother highest education, and father highest education) and academic achievement. The findings indicated that certain demographic variables were associated with academic achievement in this sample. Specifically, there was a statistically significant relationship found between high school GPA and academic achievement $X^2 (3, N = 97) = 40.04, p < 0.001$, ultimate degree aspiration and academic achievement $X^2 (2, N = 97) = 20.57, p < 0.001$, and post-undergraduate aspirations and academic achievement $X^2 (2, N = 97) = 9.41, p = .009$. These findings are consistent with existent research (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2007).

Interestingly, socioeconomic status and parental or caregiver educational status were not statistically significant. For socioeconomic status, many studies have found that individuals from lower socioeconomic statuses face more challenges with persistence and academic achievement in college (Brown, 2008; Harper, 2007; Kim & Hargrove, 2013; Morales & Trotman, 2004). However, this study could have been limited by the number of students who were from a lower level of socioeconomic status. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2020), poverty (or low socioeconomic status) is based on family household income; $35,160 per year for a household of 6 people is considered poverty. In this study, over 85% of the participants stated that their household income was above $35,000; therefore, socioeconomic status is higher for this sample of Black men. Typical measurements of socioeconomic status would be lower in a larger sample of Black men across universities in the U.S. As it pertains to parent’s or caregiver’s highest education, these findings are surprising. There were a high number of men who did not know the extent of their father’s education, which may have impacted the
association with academic achievement; however, mother’s highest education was expected to have an association with academic achievement as most of the sample (60%) indicated a mother with a bachelor’s degree or higher.

**Summary**

Results of this study support the purpose stated in Chapter 1, that is Black college men are a resilient group who utilize various strategies to persist and find success in PWIs. This study provided empirical support for the anti-deficit approach of studying the factors which help Black men to succeed in college. Firstly, it proved that Black men possess positive characteristics such as academic resilience to persevere and achieve academically. Secondly, it proved that Black males are engaged in their education and instructive practices offered by PWIs. Thirdly, it conveyed how Black men understand the value of a college education and the benefits it provides for their futures. Fourth, it proved how Black men nurture one another and seek out their peers in order to maintain and persist at PWIs. Finally, these results place the responsibility of engaging students in education on the institution, instead of the student. Most importantly, this study helps to change the negative perspectives and stories of Black males in higher education to those of resilience, commitment, persistence, and achievement.

**Limitations**

This study relies on self-reported GPA from participants, which can be problematic. Although self-reported GPA is common in research, it can be risky considering the reliance of students to provide an accurate and unbiased rating (Cassidy, 2000). Likewise, the use of Likert-scales in the surveys could affect results; the differences between agree and strongly agree could be arbitrary to the participant, but important for the results of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013).
Finally, the ARS-30 instrument, notwithstanding sound psychometric properties, has only one previous application.

The participants of this study are from one Midwestern PWI. Consequently, generalizing the results can be problematic. In consideration of this study’s inherent anti-deficit approach, Black men are not a monolithic group and a subset of Black men from one Midwestern PWI do not speak for the experiences of all Black men at PWIs. Furthermore, this study did not include Black men who are past the 6-year mark of attending college, which can affect the generalizability of the results. Finally, Black women were not included in this study. The intention of this study is not to exclude the experiences of Black women as they also have persevered in unsupportive PWIs. However, statistics have shown that Black women continue to achieve and graduate from college at a higher rate than Black men; baccalaureate degrees earned by Black females were nearly double that of males in 2010 (66% vs. 34%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Implications for Practice

The findings in this study have implications for psychological practice. Through the identification of specific aspects of academic resilience (such as perseverance and adaptive help-seeking), PWI counseling centers can target more interventions and supports to enhance Black male students’ ability to persevere through academic challenges and stress in the college setting. It is well documented that Black men in college are disinclined to seek professional help, particularly therapy, because they lack trust in mental health professionals who are typically White (Williams & Justice, 2010). As discussed above, the Black men in this study did not feel a sense of belonging on their campus. Prior studies have shown that the lack of Black male staff at PWIs can lead to Black males feeling unwelcomed (Hunn, 2014). PWI counseling centers should engage in multicultural competent and racial justice trainings to become knowledgeable in ways
they can encourage Black men to seek help. Specifically, PWI counseling centers should hire more Black male therapists and counselors who have experience working with Black men, partner with Black led student organizations or Greek life, and conduct outreach workshops that aim to connect with Black men and educate them on coping strategies and overcoming racial stressors.

**Implications for Universities**

It is important that PWI leaders assess the racial climate of their campuses to develop a sense of its influence on Black male experiences. In this study alone, most of the Black men identified that they do not feel like they are part of the campus. PWI leaders can work with institutional centers for diversity and equity to develop programs which focus on strategic planning to foster more inclusive campus environments. Williamson (2010) found that that some colleges engage Black students through campus family days, friendly socials, and sporting events. This study also found that post-undergraduate aspirations are associated with academic achievement. Therefore, PWI student affairs employees should create programs that assist Black men in development of future career and educational aspirations. As high school GPA was also associated with academic achievement in this study, PWIs could implement pre-college readiness summer courses for Black men prior to beginning their first semester.

To help Black men in fostering academic resilience, PWIs can develop preemptive academic procedures to support Black men who are in danger of falling behind academically and who are excelling academically. This can be helpful in two ways; firstly, it helps the institution and professors to communicate better with Black students through positive and supportive implementation; secondly, it encourages students and reinforces their motivation by showing that they are cared for. Finally, professors at PWIs could create a mentoring relationship with Black
students. Mentorship can create an experience that will increase Black students’ engagement with coursework and other faculty, as well as increase their involvement in campus events.

Other initiatives could include an increase of funding for departments, centers, and faculty that offer social justice and critical race theory perspectives. PWIs could require departments to hire researchers and educators who utilize critical race theories in the curriculum. Also, enacting consequences for those departments who choose not to hire researchers and professors of color or change the curriculum to include the experiences of Black people. It should also be noted that the Black men in this study proved they are resilient and effective at traversing the racist environments of PWIs. Therefore, it would also be appropriate for PWI top administrators, professors, coaches, counseling centers, and other personnel to be required to attend workshops or trainings which have a focus on anti-racism and implicit bias.

Anti-racists trainings could help to provide an overview of the structural of systemic racism within their respective institutions, which work to exclude the experiences of Black people. These trainings could also help PWIs to understand how to create and maintain environment that feel safe, welcoming, and supportive of Black students. The current study also recognizes that training and instructing PWIs on how to enact culturally relevant and inclusive curriculums offers only a glimpse towards eliminating racism in higher education. Conveying a commitment to anti-racism through creating laws that govern education institutions provides a larger scope.

So, how do we begin to answer the question of how to disrupt and dismantle the systemic racism that Black men are subjected to, not only in higher education, but across all institutions of business in the U.S.? It must begin at the top, by lobbying legislators and organizations to help make the changes necessary to provide a path for more Black males to reach success in higher
education. Lobbyists influence public opinion, legislation and education expenditure, which lead to policies and regulations that govern education institutions. There have been many examples of how lobbying and changing laws are effective ways to enforce change to support communities of color. On the national level, laws such as, the seminal *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* and *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (2000), as amended*, were created to address segregation and discrimination in schools based on race and led the way for state-based education legislation.

On the state level, there are cases such as the 2014 *Falcon School District 49 in Colorado Springs, Colorado*, which was instituted to resolve complaints about the district’s response to racial harassment and discrimination in its schools. The settlement agreement requires the district to adequately address incidents of racial harassment by keeping adequate records, analyzing those records, training teachers and students, and providing appropriate disciplinary responses. Additionally, *Lee & United States v. Macon* in Alabama, which resolved issues related to the overrepresentation of Black students in emotional disturbance special education classifications and the underrepresentation of Black students in the specific learning disabilities and gifted and talented special education classifications.

More recently, In June 2020, the Indianapolis Public School District in Indiana, implemented a Racial Equity Policy and publicly acknowledged that Black lives matter in their resolution; *Resolution No. 7861 and Board Policy 1619 – Racial Equity Mindset, Commitment, and Actions*. This resolution sought to limit policing in schools, hire and retain more Black staff, and partner with racial equity organizations to adjust curriculum and train staff. These examples underscore the importance and need for lobbying legislators in an effort to create laws that will increase the success for Black students in education.
Future Research Directions

The findings of this study contribute to a body of research which investigates the academic achievement of Black men in PWIs. Accordingly, this study also aimed to utilize an anti-deficit approach in the examination of Black male academic resilience and student engagement among their demographic factors. This study should be replicated to increase validity and add to anti-deficit informed research on Black men. Participants from PWIs from outside the Midwest should be recruited. It may also provide evidence of more culturally appropriate educational practices by including participants from HBCUs. Additionally, more in-depth information regarding participants’ racial and cultural background could be gained by using other instruments that measure racial and ethnic identity.

Another important factor to consider in future studies would be how to address the question of which factors are most significant in predicting academic success for Black student. For instance, in the current study the combination of AR and SE were not found to be statistically significant in predicting academic achievement. A better way to conduct that analyses would have been to run a logistic regression or linear regression on each individual subscale of AR and SE instead of using the total scores. Furthermore, it would be more useful to obtain consent from participants to get access to their GPA directly from the school instead of asking them to self-report. This would allow for numerical data to run a linear regression and it would eliminate the concern of participants overreporting their GPA.

As all of the participants in this study were men, it would be valuable to replicate this study with more women as well. Considering the higher college outcomes for Black female students, the results would likely differ if the sample were predominantly female. As stated above, it is also likely that higher levels of engagement and academic resilience would be found
if this study included participants from HBCUs or Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). It is also recommended that future research consider other forms of assessing student GPA besides self-report, due to the possibility of bias (Cassady, 2000).
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Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval Letter
Date: December 11, 2018

To: Joseph Morris, Principal Investigator
   Henry McCain, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 18-11-21

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Keys for Black Male Achievement: Academic Resilience and Student Engagement at Predominately White Institutions” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., you must request a post-approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under “Number of subjects you want to complete the study”). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: December 10, 2019
Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer
Black College Undergraduate Men
Needed!!

Are you enrolled at Western Michigan University?
Do you identify as a Black male?

If so, you are eligible to participate in an online survey and enter a drawing to receive a $25.00 Amazon gift card.

**Purpose:** I would like to invite you to participate in completely anonymous research to explore your academic and engagement experiences at WMU influence your academic achievement.

**Who:** To be a participant in this study you must:

- Identify as a Black male
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have been enrolled as an undergraduate student in the previous semester at WMU

**What:** You will be asked to participate in a 10-15 minute online survey.

**How:** If you are interested please email henry.c.mccain@wmich.edu or visit the following link to access the survey. (Survey Link)

**Scan here to take survey on your mobile device:**

**Benefits:** Enter into drawing to receive one of four $25.00 Amazon gift cards.

For more information or questions, you may contact Henry McCain:
henry.c.mccain@wmich.edu.

Please share this flyer with other Black male WMU students. Thank you!
Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire
Demographic Questionnaire

Age
1. 18-24
2. 25-34
3. 35 or older

Ethnicity
1. African
2. African American
3. West Indian/Caribbean Black
4. Bi-Racial/Multi-racial
5. Other

Class Level
1. Freshman
2. Sophomore
3. Junior
4. Senior (4th year or above)

Socioeconomic Status (Refers to parent or caregiver household income)
1. $25,000-34,999
2. $35,000-49,999
3. $50,000-74,999
4. $75,000 to 99,999
5. $100,000-149,999
Current GPA
1. 1.0 – 2.4
2. 2.5 - 3.4
3. 3.5 - 3.9
4. 4.0 – Above

High School GPA
1. 1.0 – 2.4
2. 2.5 - 3.4
3. 3.5 - 3.9
4. 4.0 – Above

Ultimate Degree Aspiration
1. Bachelor's Degree
2. Master's Degree
3. Doctorate

Post-Undergraduate Aspirations
1. Enroll in Graduate School
2. Work Full-time
3. Unsure
Mother Highest Education (or primary caregiver)

1. High School Diploma
2. Some College
3. Associate’s Degree
4. Bachelor’s Degree
5. Master’s Degree
6. Doctorate

Father Highest Education (or primary caregiver)

1. High School Diploma
2. Some College
3. Associate’s Degree
4. Bachelor’s Degree
5. Master’s Degree
6. Doctorate
Appendix D

Permission to Use SES
Hello Dr. Gunuc,

I hope this email finds you doing well. I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology at Western Michigan University writing my dissertation titled *Academic Resilience and Student Engagement: Keys for Black Male Achievement at Predominantly White Institutions*, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Joseph Morris, who can be reached at joseph.morris@wmich.edu or 269 387-5112.

I am writing because I would like permission to use the Student Engagement Scale (SES) in my research study with the goal of providing additional evidence for reliability and validity. I would like to use your test and agree that (a) I will use the SES only for my research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated or curriculum development activities; (b) I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument; (c) I will send a copy of my completed research study to your attention upon completion of the study; and (d) I will pay for access to the SES.

I have completed my proposal and will be in the process of obtaining IRB approval. I will submit an application to the WMU IRB who can be reached at (269) 387-8293 or by contacting Julia Mays at Julia.Mays@wmich.edu. Please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback. I very much appreciate the work you are doing for our field and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Henry C. McCain III M.A., TLLP
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI
Dear Henry,

You can use it. No need to pay.

Wishes

Doc. Dr. Selim Günüş
SiberPsikoloji
Psikoloji Bölümü
İzmir Bakkıçay Üniversitesi

Associate Prof. Selim Günuc
CyberPsychology
Psychology Department
İzmir Bakkıçay University

Post-Doc/Researcher
Psychology Department / CyberPsychology
Nottingham Trent University
Appendix E

Permission to Use ARS-30
Hello Dr. Cassidy,

I hope this email find you doing well. I am Henry McCain, a doctoral student from Western Michigan University writing my dissertation titled *Academic Resilience and Student Engagement: Keys for Black Male Achievement at Predominantly White Institutions*, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Joseph Morris, who can be reached at joseph.morris@wmich.edu or 269 387-5112.

I am writing because I would like permission to use the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30) in my research study with the goal of providing additional evidence for reliability and validity. I would like to use your test and agree that (a) I will use the ARS-30 only for my research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated or curriculum development activities; (b) I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument; (c) I will send a copy of my completed research study to your attention upon completion of the study; and (d) I will pay for access to the ARS-30.

I have completed my proposal and will be in the process of obtaining IRB approval. I will submit an application to the WMU IRB who can be reached at (269) 387-8293 or by contacting Julia Mays at julia.mays@wmich.edu. Please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback. I very much appreciate the work you are doing for our field and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Henry C. McCain III M.A., TLLP
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI
Dear Henry,

I am attaching the scale and scoring key. Please do not distribute these and ensure that any copies of the scale, including those available via online platforms, are destroyed or removed once the project is completed.

Best of luck and I look forwarding reading your work when it is available.

Best wishes,

Simon.