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**A CASE STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES**

by

Loistean Mason

**A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership**

**Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1996**

A CASE STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

Loistean Mason, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1996

Several areas are often identified as barriers to the academic achievement of African American males. They include racial inequality, segregation between schools, segregation within schools, cultural insensitivity to learning styles, the theory of cultural deprivation, teacher/student interaction, and the discipline of African American students. The study was conducted in a Midwestern school with a predominantly African American student body and faculty at the end of the final grading period before graduation. This study of 12th-grade males sought to determine if the climate of an African American high school with African American administrators and faculty would enhance the achievement of African American males. Climate was defined as students' perceptions rather than faculty's and was measured by administering the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1987) Student Satisfaction Survey. Items used to measure perceptions included satisfaction with teachers, satisfaction with schoolwork, satisfaction with discipline, satisfaction with decision-making opportunities, and satisfaction with communication. The .05 alpha level of significance was used and the findings of the study revealed that of the five areas surveyed, there were statistical differences between the satisfaction of the sample group and the normative group. These areas were satisfaction

with schoolwork, discipline, and decision-making opportunities, with no statistical differences in the areas of satisfaction with teachers and communication.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of those who contributed to this major accomplishment. First of all I must thank God, through whom I live and have my being. I thank Him for blessing me with the opportunity to experience such intellectual and spiritual growth. I know that it was only by His grace that I was able to overcome the many challenges that were encountered in this endeavor.

I thank my husband and my family for their unwavering support and encouragement along this wonderful "journey." To my children, Stephan, Cindy, Renell, Grant, Deryl, Randall, Brenda, Lachelle, Rachelle, Marceda, and Lynetta, I hope that this accomplishment will inspire all of you to never give up your dreams, no matter how long it might take you to achieve them. You have been an inspiration to me with your love and constant words of encouragement that often gave me that extra push to give more when I felt that I had nothing more to give.

A very special thanks to my counselor and my committee chair, Dr. Charles Warfield, who so ably assisted me in charting my course and steering me through the murky waters on this voyage. To Dr. Morris, thank you not only for your technical input but for your patience and guidance that often prevented me from going "overboard." Dr. Cowden, you have my sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude for all of your guidance and assistance. I must say a very, very special thanks to a very special lady who makes it her business to ensure that minority students receive the financial assistance that they need. That person is

Acknowledgments--Continued

Ms. Griselda Daniel. To Mrs. Lee Pakko, a special thank you for all of your help in preventing me from "drowning." I would be remiss if I did not give credit to the two men who inspired me to enter the field of administration and later served as both my role models and mentors. They are the late Mr. J. D. Chavis, Sr., who was my dear friend as well as my brother-in-law and his best friend, in the person of Mr. Henry A. McClaron.

Last but certainly not least I want to thank my mother, who was the initiator of it all. You have been my best friend and confidant all of my life. Those wonderful lessons of faith and courage that you modeled and taught me as a child were what shaped and molded me into who and what I am today and for that I will always be grateful. I thank you for teaching me to never give up, to always look up, and to always strive to be the best at whatever I attempted to do. Most of all I thank you for introducing me to the One who has been the source of all of my strength and all of my joy. As the result of that introduction I am able to rest on the assurance that, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Loistean Mason

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Much has been researched and written concerning the plight of the African American male. Twenty-one percent of 18- and 19-year-old and 25% of all 20- and 21-year-old Black youth had neither completed nor were presently enrolled in high school in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1981). Those who are in school achieve at a much lower level than their White counterparts. Few have A averages and many have D and F averages in most subject areas (Gibbs, 1988; Hacker, 1995; Kuykendall, 1992).

During the 1980s, college enrollment rates among Black men (and women) declined, while enrollment rates of White men (and women) rose (Hacker, 1995). By 1988, the college enrollment rate for Black males was about 20 percentage points lower than those of White males. Unfortunately, college enrollment rates of Black males were declining while employers were offering higher wage premiums to (Black and White) workers with some college training (C. S. Anderson, 1994).

Finally, employment and earnings of Black high school graduates also declined in the 1980s (Mincey, 1994). Unemployment among Black youth in 1986 was 34.0%--twice the rate of 17.4% among all teenagers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1987).

The rate of delinquency among Black youth has increased from

19.6% of all juvenile arrests in 1960 to 23.2% in 1985; thus, 407,807, or approximately 7% of all Black adolescents in the 10-19 age group, were arrested in 1985 (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 1986). Black juveniles were arrested more frequently than Whites for robbery, rape, homicide, and aggravated assault. They were also more likely than White juveniles to be arrested for other violent personal crimes, disorderly conduct, sexual misbehavior, and handling stolen property (Gibbs, 1988). Currently, approximately 38% of all Black males are involved in the criminal justice system, either as inmates, or on parole or probation (C. S. Anderson, 1994).

The problems that young African American males face in the 1990s is a continuation of the aftermath of slavery and segregation in the past and racial discrimination and prejudice that exist today.

Gibbs (1988) offered four major factors that help explain the present day plight of African American males: historical, sociocultural, economic, and political factors.

From slavery up to the present time Blacks have been denied the right to "belong." They were freed from slavery but segregated from the mainstream through "Jim Crow" laws based on the color of their skin. After the abolishment of legal segregation they are still discriminated against based on the color of their skin. Laws can be changed but there is no legislation that governs attitudes and beliefs (Benjamin, 1991).

The ideology that provided the rationale for slavery still persists. Blacks are still seen as inferiors who not only are unsuited for equality but don't even merit a chance to show their worth (Benjamin, 1991; Kuykendall, 1992; Ogbu, 1978). Immigrants just off the boat are

allowed to assert their superiority to Black Americans (Hacker, 1995).

Discrimination is a concept which Blacks are forced to confront on a daily basis in every aspect of their lives, in schools, employment, politically, and in their neighborhoods. Middle-class Blacks often abandon their neighborhoods leaving behind the poor Blacks who have no effective leadership, no resources to maintain their neighborhoods, and ultimately have no hope for a better future.

Socioculturally, the lack of resources and leadership in the inner cities have negatively impacted the basic foundation of the Black community which has always been the Black church. The effectiveness of the political organizations has been weakened as a result of the loss of the wealthier and better educated members of the inner cities (Benjamin, 1991; Calabrese, 1990; Cose, 1993; Gibbs, 1988; Lomotey, 1990; Ogbu, 1978).

The breakdown of the Black traditional institutions has caused a breakdown in the Black community values of the importance of family, religion, education, self-improvement, and social cohesion through extensive social support networks. Many Blacks in inner cities no longer seem to feel connected to each other, responsible for each other, or concerned about each other. Rather than a sense of shared community and a common purpose which once characterized Black neighborhoods, these inner cities now reflect a sense of hopelessness, alienation, and frustration (Gibbs, 1988; Hacker, 1995).

Volumes have been written regarding the fact that there are more college-aged African American males in prison than there are in universities; that more young males die from homicide than from any known

disease. Some have gone so far as to declare that the African American male has become an endangered species (Gibbs, 1988; Kunjufu, 1986; Madhubuti, 1990; Majors & Gordon, 1994; Welsing, 1991).

Kunjufu (1986) alleged that it is no coincidence that African American males lag behind in academic achievement, are suspended/expelled more often than any other student population, and are the least represented in advanced level high school courses. There is a pervasive feeling (Welsing, 1991) among many African Americans that African American males pose the greatest threat to White supremacy; therefore, it is during their childhood that the system of American racism and oppression begins to cripple African American males so that when they reach adulthood they are socially, physically, and politically impotent (Kunjufu, 1986).

The public education system selects and sorts the general student populace according to class and status. But where African Americans are concerned, particularly African American males, it goes even further than simply sorting. It intentionally demoralizes them to assure that they do not become successful in school which will ultimately prevent their success in life. Many feel that the education system does not fail in its function but rather fulfills its covert purpose; to perpetuate a permanent underachieving, socially obsolete group of Blacks (Glasgow, 1980; Jones-Wilson, 1990; Kunjufu, 1986; Ogbu, 1978).

Some researchers would have one believe that African Americans cannot be successful due to certain inherent deficiencies (Jensen, 1969). However, even those who obtain a formal education and manage to access the ladder of mobility soon discover that the rungs of their

ladder do not extend "all the way" to the top (Benjamin, 1991; Cose, 1993).

A study of the African American middle class by Cose (1993) appears to support Kunjufu's (1986) claim of crippling, in that he discovered that many in this group had a statement and a question.

I have done everything I was supposed to do. I have stayed out of trouble with the law, gone to the right schools, and worked myself nearly to death. What more do they want: Why in God's name won't they accept me as a full human being: Why am I pigeonholed in a 'Black job'? Why am I constantly treated as if I were a drug addict, a thief, or a thug? Why am I still not allowed to aspire to the same things every White person in America takes as a birthright? (Cose, 1993, p. 1)

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine if an African American high school (with African American administration and a majority African American faculty) has a climate that encourages African American males to achieve academically.

Significance of the Study

Numerous explanations have been offered as to why African Americans cannot be successful in America; they are lazy; unmotivated; culturally deprived; and the most popular of them all, they are inferior. The evidence most often given to substantiate these claims is that other ethnic groups have come to this country and in a short time span have become very successful (Hacker, 1995).

The researcher maintains that the real explanation is that although slavery has long since been abolished the "master-slave" mentality still

remains. This mentality was most recently brought to light in the White man's blatant pronouncement that affirmative action was allowing Blacks to take "their" jobs. If White people are compelled to compete against one another, they are also urged to believe that any advances Blacks may make will be at White expense (Hacker, 1995). That belief has most certainly always been there but today it appears to be acceptable to make it public with no apologies.

Slavery was a form of total control of African Americans, segregation another form, and discrimination today is yet another form. The struggle for control begins early for the African American male, as early as elementary school. There was a student who worked in elementary schools as a substitute teacher during her college breaks. She stated that she could not believe that one of the first-grade teachers had actually left a seating chart that noted who the troublemakers were. Almost all of the noted troublemakers were African Americans, the majority of whom were males. She was later informed that this was a common practice at all levels in public schools and that the list of troublemakers was almost always passed from one grade teacher to the next all the way to high school. Her conclusion was that those kids were being labeled for life. Unfortunately, those labels often start those children on a journey that ultimately leads them to prison or the cemetery at an early age.

The results of this study are expected to shed some light on what needs to be done in the public school system to improve the opportunity for a quality education for all students, African American males included. The results are also expected to offer information that will encourage educators to acknowledge that a serious problem of inequity of

education does exist and that the problem affects more than the African American community.

The study attempted to answer the following questions: Is the level of satisfaction in the areas of teachers, schoolwork, decision-making opportunities, discipline, and communication different for this population in comparison to the level of satisfaction in those same areas in a normative group? In addition, is there any difference between the satisfaction levels of students from single parent households in comparison to those coming from two-parent households?

Definition of Terms

Academic achievement: simply defined here as the completion of the 12th grade.

African American and Black are used interchangeably due to the preferences of various authors.

Climate: Nwankwo (1979) referred to climate as "the general 'we-feeling,'" group sub-culture or interactive life of the school" (p. 268). Climate is also defined as the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members (Keefe, Kelly, & Miller, 1985).

Hoy and Clover (1986) defined school climate as the teachers' perceptions of the work environment. More specifically, they contended that climate is a set of measurable properties of the work environment of teachers and administrators based on their collective perceptions.

For the purpose of this study climate is defined as the students' perceptions of the school environment. These perceptions are measured

according to the students' level of satisfaction. Satisfaction is defined as the personal, affective response of an individual to a particular situation or condition in the environment (Halderson, Kelley, Keefe, & Berge, 1989).

Dropout: This definition varies from school to school. The researcher defines it here as a student who does not attend his or her designated school for an entire semester.

Expulsion: When a student is formally excluded, by the administration, from attending any school within his or her school district for a designated period of time.

Suspension: The concept of suspension varies among school districts. However, for the sake of this study, the researcher defines suspension as a day or number of days that a student is out of school by order of the school administration.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the review of related literature was to review evidence of what the barriers are that prevent African American males from being high academic achievers in public education, and also to review literature that would reveal what is needed to counter the widespread low level of academic achievement of this population (Gallien, 1992; Glenn & McLean, 1981; Pine & Hillard, 1990).

The primary barrier to high academic achievement among African American males is the reality that public education was never intended to educate the masses in an equitable manner. Inequality of education in the public school extends beyond the issue of race. The literature reveals that schools fulfill the purpose of maintaining the status quo (Hacker, 1995; Kozol, 1991; Rist, 1973) and keeping children in the same socio-economic level as their parents.

Schooling has basically served to instill the values of an expanding industrial society and to fit the aspirations and motivations of individuals to the labor market at approximately the same level as that of their parents. Thus it is that some children find themselves slotted toward becoming workers and others toward becoming the managers of those workers (Lomotey, 1990; Ogbu, 1978; Rist, 1973).

Listed as one of the most immediate and pressing concerns of

urban education is "the institution of policies and programs that reduce access to education or eliminate efforts to provide equal educational opportunity for underprivileged children" (Lomotey, 1990, p. 43).

Rist (1973) further contended that under the guise of creating an enlightened citizenry, schools for the poor and the immigrant child were organized so as to resemble closely the conditions of the factory and prepare young people to perceive the inevitability of the capitalist division of labor. African Americans were viewed as a pool that would always be available for the manual labor required of them by the White society (C. S. Anderson, 1994; Hacker, 1995).

Education was provided in public education based upon one's status in society. Some researchers (The Holmes Group, 1990; Ryan, 1971) have suggested that middle-class teachers attend to middle-class children and label them the most talented and ambitious children in the class. Lower-class children over time would give up trying and amass failing "institutional biographies" (Hale-Benson, 1986) as they move through school because they are unable to give evidence of their intelligence in terms of the limited code that teachers use for evaluating children.

Inaccurate teacher assessments of student abilities tend to nurture student failure by reinforcing prejudicial, stereotypic attitudes, and perceptions about the learning capability of the children and ultimately, about their humanity (Kuykendall, 1992; Ogbu, 1978). Under these circumstances, teachers do not get the opportunity to perceive the intellectual diversity in minority families. With standards and expectations for academic performance then lowered or fitted to a generalized

stereotype, teachers tend not to teach effectively and pupils tend not to learn. The pupil is then evaluated or graded as having only average ability or as being hopeless, and certain low yield pedagogic resources are provided to fit this diagnosis.

Racial Inequalities in Public Education

Inequity in public education has been stated as the primary reason why a higher percentage of all children, in general, are not successful academically. Studies have shown that racial inequity is the primary barrier to academic success among African American students in general and African American males in particular.

Racial inequality in public education is not surprising when one considers the following: (a) The constitution of the United States considered Blacks as only three-fifths of a person; (b) the first president of the United States was, himself, a wealthy slaveholder; (c) it was declared illegal for a slave to be taught to read; and (d) the only reason that Blacks were brought to this country was for the purpose of the use of their labor in the development of the nation and the prosperity of White Europeans in this country (C. S. Anderson, 1994).

For African Americans the reality is that race, according to society's definition, has been a major determining factor in institutional arrangements, particularly in regards to the dominant power structure's formulation of what it considered to be appropriate educational policies, programs, and practices (Hacker, 1995; Jones-Wilson, 1990; Ogbu, 1978).

J. D. Anderson (1988) contended that after the Civil War Whites

debated as to whom should be educated and to what extent. The primary question was: Should there be universal public schooling for Blacks and Whites, a racially restrictive form of universal public education, or no formal schooling at all for Blacks? White southern aristocrats resisted universal education, especially for Blacks. White industrialists and philanthropists felt that universal schooling for everyone, both Black and White, would be complementary to an economy that was changing from an agricultural to an industrial base. The vision of education that was proposed for Blacks, however, was not the same as the vision of education for Whites. Emphasis was placed on vocational training for Blacks to ensure economic productivity and it was coupled with a plan to socialize Blacks into subordinate societal roles, which would, in turn, contribute to social stability (J. D. Anderson, 1988; Lomotey, 1990).

Northern missionaries believed that Black children had the right to quality education as well as political and civil equality. Therefore, not only did race play a vital part in the fundamental educational decisions in the post Civil War era, but ideology, class status, economics, politics, and geographic/regional differences were involved as well (J. D. Anderson, 1988; Ogbu, 1978).

The debate between the White southern aristocrats and the White industrialists resulted in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* (as cited in Jones-Wilson, 1990) decision that constitutionally established the separate but equal doctrine. That decision reigned until it was struck down by the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (as cited in Jones-Wilson, 1990) decision in 1954.

Although racial segregation was legally outlawed, there was no

legislation that could change the hearts and attitudes of those in power. In the year of 1991, 39 years after the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision, there were over 400 school districts throughout the nation that were under a court-ordered desegregation plan (Marable, 1992).

Segregation Between Schools

Segregation between schools serves as a very effective barrier to high academic achievement of all children, with the greatest impact on African American children.

In a study on high school dropouts researchers (Hess & Greer, 1986) discovered what they called an educational triage in the public education system. In other words, some of the schools were designed to save the best students, some were designed to be holding pens for the worst prepared students, and a small mid-range just plodded along.

In reference to his study of the same school district, Kozol (1991) stated that "the system has the surface aspects of a meritocracy, but merit in this case is predetermined by conditions that are closely tied to class and race" (p. 60). He went on to say that "while some defend it as, in theory, 'the survival of the fittest,' it is more accurate to call it the survival of the children of the fittest--or of the most favored" (p. 60).

Other authors have identified what they term a "five-tier school system" (Watson, 1989, p. 309). The first tier is formed by exam schools which require students to pass an entrance exam for admission. Only the best students are accepted and often qualify for the choicest scholarships.

Magnet schools comprise the second tier and students are admitted only after meeting specified criteria. Children from all over the city are allowed to enter as long as they meet the entrance requirements.

At the third tier are the selective vocational schools, some of which have very restrictive admission criteria. Poor and minority young people are overrepresented in those who are kept out.

Nonselective, moderate-income-area schools make up the fourth tier. Some of these schools have admission criteria that are more stringent than those of academic schools.

At the fifth and lowest tier are the nonselective, low-income-area schools that are attended by the nation's poor and minority students. Many of the students end up in these schools primarily because they are the only schools left for them to attend (Watson, 1989). The inequality of this system is that all of the schools are public schools, not private schools, and are funded by taxpayers that include the poor as well as the wealthy.

Segregation Within Schools

The Holmes Group (1990) suggested that schools do, in a sense, construct failure particularly for poor children and minorities. Schools profess egalitarian ideals but sort students in a variety of ways over the course of their careers. The sorting begins early, legitimated by subtle and overt interpretations of students' abilities. Children are characterized as smart or slow because of color, neighborhood, quality of clothing, or understanding of English. Such judgments can be based on standardized tests of dubious validity (Hale-Benson, 1986; Lomotey, 1990), reflecting

outmoded conceptions of human abilities. Once labeled, students sit imprisoned in the labels.

Tracking

In situations where it is not feasible to establish a triage, some parents and school officials choose a means of segregation within the school buildings (Lomotey, 1990). One of the most successful methods is a system called tracking. Tracking is a system (and a barrier) whereby children with low ability are placed in low ability programs that supposedly meet their distinctive needs. There is what is called a general studies program and there is an advanced level program. Children in the general program track may, at some point, take courses in the advanced track. Children in the lower track, however, will almost never be able to take advanced level courses. Once a student is placed in the lower track, that student remains in that track until graduation or the student drops out of school (Hacker, 1995; Kozol, 1991).

Research on tracking and the stratification of knowledge in American, British, and Canadian schools (Lomotey, 1990; Ogbu, 1978; Solomon, 1992) indicates that the working-class and racial minorities are more likely than their middle-class peers to be in low-track programs. It is such placement that determines minorities' future positions in the occupational hierarchy. Working-class and racial minority students have become very much aware of their futures and actively reject a curriculum that commits them to a future of generalized labor.

Braddock and Dawkins (1990) stated that one of the arguments used against tracking focuses on the findings which reveal that tracking

leads to unequal educational opportunities by distributing formal and informal educational resources unequally to different students (Darling-Hammond, 1986). Those who oppose tracking point out the fact that children who have the greatest needs and may be the most challenging to teach are often assigned to teachers who are the least prepared to teach this population.

Other critics have described a cumulative process over the grades that causes a widening of the aspirations and achievement between students in the top and bottom tracks over a period of time (Oakes, 1985).

Due to the weakness of the learning environment in the lower tracks, those students who are first assigned to a bottom track class have an even poorer chance of moving to a higher level when they enter the next grade. Therefore, the effects of tracking produce slower and slower rates of learning and lower and lower levels of motivation for the children at the bottom of the track and smaller and smaller chances of receiving better track assignments (Braddock & Dawkins, 1990).

Numerous case studies have shown that the lower track classes are stigmatized by the generally accepted perception that students in those classes are not capable learners and cannot be expected to master the same kinds of skills that are demanded of students in other classes. As a result of the negative images shared by both teachers and students in lower track classes fewer curriculum units are covered, the pace of instruction is slower, fewer demands are made for learning higher order skills, and test and homework requirements are taken less seriously (Oakes, 1985).

Results of a National Educational Longitudinal Study (as cited in Braddock & Dawkins, 1990) reported that in 1988, 32% of African American 10th grade students were enrolled in academic programs compared to 39% of White sophomores. Forty-four percent were enrolled in general education programs as opposed to 52% of Whites, and 24% were enrolled in vocational education programs compared to 10% of White sophomores. African American students were significantly overrepresented in the vocational education track and significantly underrepresented in the academic and general education tracks compared to White students.

Another method of within-school segregation used by officials is special education programs which are found in almost all public schools. While African American students represent only 16% of all school students they comprise almost 40% of those students who are labeled as mentally retarded or emotionally handicapped. Many students are placed in special programs not necessarily because of their mental capacities but in many cases it is because their behavior does not measure up to or "mirror" middle-class demeanor (Gibbs, 1988; Hacker, 1995).

Cultural Insensitivity to Learning Styles

Research has shown that many African American and Hispanic students have a learning style that is not always congruent with the style of teaching that is dominant in American public education (Hale-Benson, 1986; Hilliard, 1976; Kuykendall, 1992; Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

Cohen (1969) identified two learning styles which she labeled as

analytical and relational. Analytic and relational styles refer to the different ways in which one selects and classifies information.

Cohen (1969) alleged that schools require one specific approach to cognitive organization, which is analytic, and that those students who have not developed those particular skills will not do well in school. She further claimed that the differences between children who function with relational and analytic styles are so great that those with relational learning styles are unlikely to be rewarded socially with grades no matter what their natural ability might be, the depth of their information, nor their background of experience. In addition, the child with the relational cognitive style will probably be considered deviant and disruptive in the analytically oriented learning environment of the school (Cohen, 1969).

In her book, Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Styles, Hale-Benson (1986) hypothesized that "certain characteristics, peculiar to Black culture, have their roots in West Africa and have implications for the way in which Black children learn and think" (p. 4). She observed that as a result of their Black culture, Black children "may have distinctive learning and expressive styles that can be observed in their play behavior" (p. 5).

Hale-Benson (1986) associated the learning style of Blacks with the relational style of Cohen (1969) and suggested many Blacks employ people-oriented, relational, and field dependent/sensitive styles of learning rather than the analytical style that formal education employs. It has been suggested that the low-achievement of many Black students may be attributed to the incongruence of their relational learning style and the analytic style of teaching which is dominant in public education (Cohen,

1969; Kuykendall, 1992).

Kuykendall (1992) stressed that not all Black and Hispanic students employ the same learning style. She observed, however, that people-oriented learning is a learning style derived from African heritage. This African influence can be reflected in the way Black parents socialize and teach their children.

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) conducted studies on the difference between field independent and field dependent students. (They substituted "field-sensitive" for field dependent). Their studies determined that field independent and field sensitive students differ in significant ways in both their learning styles and their behaviors.

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) discovered that field independent learners prefer to work independently, whereas field sensitive learners like to work with others to achieve a common goal. Field independent learners tend to be task-oriented and inattentive to their social environment when working, whereas field sensitive learners tend to be sensitive to the feelings and opinions of others (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

The studies showed that the teaching styles of most teachers and the school curriculum tend to reflect the characteristics of field independent students; that mainstream Anglo students tend to be more field independent than ethnic minorities such as Mexican American and Black students; that teachers seem to prefer field independent students, and that they assign field independent students higher grades (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

Cultural Deprivation Theory

Some educators embrace the theory of cultural deprivation and the interpretation that the result of coming from lower-class families explains the low academic achievement of African-American students.

The theory is that poor Black children are culturally deprived because there are no books, encyclopedias, magazines, or other reading materials in the homes. The theory also suggests that illiterate parents cause their children to have defective speech patterns and intellectual deficiencies that render them incapable of becoming high achievers in school (Coleman, 1966).

Dolce (1969) cited a school superintendent opinion that as a victim of his environment, the ghetto child begins his school career psychologically, socially, and physically disadvantaged. He is oriented to the present rather than the future, to immediate needs rather than delayed gratification, to the concrete rather than the abstract. He is often handicapped by limited verbal skills, low self-esteem, and a stunted drive toward achievement.

Although one may not be able to argue with the statement of the superintendent, care must be taken to consider those descriptives merely as indicators of the needs of these children rather than as an excuse as to why they cannot learn.

In his discussion on cultural deprivation, Ryan (1971) stressed one of the issues of this concept that deals with the skills that middle-class students bring with them when they enter kindergarten that poor children, particularly Black children, supposedly do not have.

Middle class kids are better able to distinguish between words that sound alike, are better able to perceive colors and shapes, and in imitating their parents' speech, have learned to talk in a style similar to that of most teachers. Thus, the middle class child is somewhat better prepared for the school experience than is the lower class child. But it would not be unreasonable to present this proposition in its reversed form: The school is better prepared for the middle class child than for the lower class child. Indeed, we could be tempted to say further that the school experience is tailored for, and stacked in favor of, the middle class child. (Ryan, 1971, p. 36).

Cummings (1978) contended that the notion of cultural deprivation has typically been used as an explanation of poor academic performance only among minority group students. If the idea had any validity at all, it should apply equally to individuals from any group who have been exposed to similar family experiences.

Cummings (1978) reminded the reader that the key points to keep in mind when evaluating the cultural deprivation idea are that (a) it focuses primarily upon patterns of socialization and child-rearing practices within the family setting; (b) it focuses mainly upon the social psychological issues of personality and motivation, and attempts to show a causal relationship between certain psychological variables and variations in scholastic performance; and (c) it assumes that certain achievement-related personality traits are developed in the home, and are relatively stable and immutable through time.

Ideologically, however, the important point to note is the pessimistic assumption that failure occurs before Black children even enter school.

Self-Concept

The researcher chose to use the definition of self-concept given by Jenkins (1995). He defined a person's self-concept as being "an interconnected collection of the various ideas, images, and feelings that s/he holds about the self" (p. 61).

Self-concept is important as it relates academic achievement. C. S. Anderson (1994) observed that African Americans do not do well academically often times not as a result of the lack of ability but rather as a consequence of the internalization of the way that the dominant race feels about them, with their struggles with discrimination.

Benjamin (1991) described the hardships encountered by Blacks that are the direct result of the color of their skin:

Being Black is to be conflictual; being Black means watching and walking the tightrope; being Black is to experience the double standard; being Black is to be on perennial probation; being Black is never to be good enough; being Black is to bear the race burden; being Black is to be always in a precarious status; being Black is to be forever in a continuous struggle, personally and collectively; and being Black is to wear the mask. (p. 4)

The self-concept of African American youth is impacted in a variety of ways in our public schools. As early as the third grade African American males begin to experience a difference in the way they are treated by their teachers who are primarily White and female. They are often labeled behavior problems or as having learning disabilities, which ultimately causes them to be placed in some form of special education classes. At this point their lives are placed on a course that very seldom leads to success (Lomotey, 1990; Ogbu, 1978).

By the time African American males begin the stage of puberty

they have already begun to practice what Majors (1986) called the "cool pose." Cool behavior, according to Majors, has been explored as a critical psychological defense used by some Black males to ward off the ill effects of racial oppression and social inequality.

Cool pose is a distinctive coping mechanism that serves to counter, at least in part, the dangers that Black males encounter on a daily basis. It is designed to render the Black male visible and to empower him; it eases the worry and pain of blocked opportunities. It serves as a means of hiding self-doubt, insecurity, and inner turmoil. This is a very important tool for young Black males as they search for a sense of identity and belonging in a society that treats them with utter disrespect and fear.

The cool pose is manifested in the way the young men dress--expressive clothes and the wearing of hats and trousers with loose belts. It's also apparent in other behaviors such as strutting, rapping, woofing, playing the dozens, and using certain types of language. Due to a lack of understanding teachers often misinterpret this behavior as being rude, arrogant, and disrespectful. Kochman (1981) suggested that teachers often suspend Black males as a result of their cool behaviors because they perceive them as being negative and disruptive.

Researchers have found that school officials both in and outside the United States are uncomfortable with and disapprove of any display of racial or ethnic identity. In a study of the school success of students in Britain (Gillborn, 1985), Black students made the conscious decision not to emphasize their ethnicity through their style of dress nor of their demeanor. In order to succeed academically the students acted against

the stereotypical images that the teachers had of them. When they found themselves in situations of conflict they accepted the criticisms without complaining.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) conducted a study of American schools and found similar reactions. They reported that Black students in America, too, often played down their identity and assumed a "raceless" persona in order to achieve academic success. These same students, when in their ethnic communities, engaged in behaviors that were culturally sanctioned. They concluded that although the dual allegiance created conflict within the individuals, the long-term socioeconomic benefits were substantial.

In a study of Black males who had recently migrated from the South, the researcher (Glasgow, 1980) reported that the students had a problem with the fact that there was an omission of everyday Black referents and the absence of Black history in the curriculum of their new school realized how much they had liked their old school, despite the obvious limitations of both space and materials. The common ethnicity of the pupils and teacher, the familiarity of the educational referents, and the deep peer associations in and out of school had made it a community experience. Most of all, there was a feeling the teachers cared, that "they forced the best out of us," as one student said (Glasgow, 1980, p. 55).

According to Woodson (1933), there is no particular body of facts that Negro teachers can impart to children of their own race that may not be just as easily presented by persons of another race if they have the same attitudes as Negro teachers; but in most cases tradition, race

hate, segregation, and terrorism make such a thing impossible, yet one should not take the position that a qualified White person should not teach in a Negro school. The Negro will never be able to show all of his originality as long as his efforts are directed from without by those who socially proscribe him. Such "friends" will unconsciously keep him in the ghetto.

In his autobiography, Malcolm X (as cited in Haley, 1964) cited a classic example of Woodson's (1933) concern of the Negro's friends keeping him in the ghetto:

Somehow, I happened to be alone in the classroom with Mr. Ostrowski, my English teacher. I know he probably meant well in what he happened to advise me that day. I doubt that he meant any harm. . . . He told me, "Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career. Have you been giving it any thought?"

"Well, yes sir, I've been thinking. I'd like to be a lawyer."

Mr. Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind of half smiled and said, "Malcolm, one of life's first needs is for us to be realistic. Don't misunderstand me now. We all here like you, you know that. But you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. You need to think about something you can be. You're good with your hands--making things. Everbody admires your carpentry shop work. Why don't you plan on carpentry? People like you as a person--you'd get all kinds of work. . . .

What really began to disturb me was Mr. Ostrowski's advice to others in my class--all of them White. Most of them had told him they were planning to become farmers. But those who wanted to strike out on their own, to try something new he had encouraged. Some, mostly girls, wanted to be teachers. A few wanted other professions, such as one boy who wanted to become a county agent; another, a veterinarian; and one girl wanted to be a nurse. They all reported that Mr. Ostrowski had encouraged what they wanted. Yet none of them had earned marks equal to mine.

It was surprising thing that I never thought of it that way before, but I realized that whatever I wasn't I was smarter than nearly all of those White kids. But apparently I still wasn't intelligent enough, in their eyes, to become whatever I wanted to be. It was then that I began to change--inside. (pp. 35-37)

The advice of Malcolm's English teacher appears to substantiate the claim of Rist (1973) and Kozol (1991) that the system of public education in the United States is specifically designed to aid in the perpetuation of the social and economic inequalities found within the society.

Some researchers suggest that many teachers have little or no experience with the educational needs or culture of minorities. The training of prospective and in-service teachers has not generally included the necessary courses and hands-on experience to facilitate understanding of the environment where these students live and go to school. Since teachers who work in schools with minority students often do not live in these communities, their knowledge about the lifestyle of their students tends to be limited (H. D. Hill, 1989).

Others suggest that it is this lack of knowledge that often creates conflicts, especially for African American male youths. Majors (1986) talked about a group of personality dynamics that greatly influence the behavior of African American males. They include social behavior, authenticity, language and speech, and style. He maintained that they are manifested in the following ways:

Social behavior asserts that there is a unique dynamism associated with the social behavior of urban adolescent Black males. For instance, their peer group interactions are often characterized by high levels of energy that tend to be very physical and demonstrative.

Authenticity: Adolescent Black males have a propensity to exhibit real, honest, and authentic behavior in all interactions--that is, for "being for real" or "telling it like it is." They tend not to stifle their true thoughts, feelings, or behaviors in most social situations. While such authenticity may not always be appreciated or understood by others, Black male youths tend to cut to the heart of a matter with their genuineness.

Language and speech: The language and speech of urban adolescent Black males are highly expressive and exhibit considerable creativity. Colorful slang expressions, "woofing" (making verbal threats not backed up by actions), "playing the dozens" (trading verbal insults), and the popular "rap" vernacular are innovative ways to communicate both the trivial and the profound. Often these expressive linguistic traditions are used in order to diffuse tension between young males that could lead to physical aggression.

Style: Adolescent Black males in urban areas find creative ways to put their personalities on display. One has only to examine the style and flair exhibited in the play of Black males on a basketball court, the swagger associated with walking, hats worn at a jaunty angle, distinctive handshakes, fancy sneakers, or flashy articles of clothing to appreciate this expressiveness. For young Black males, these displays of style are attempts to make a proud statement about themselves.

It is the misunderstanding of the social behavior, authenticity, and language and speech that often results in problems for the Black male. In many instances when the young men are simply woofing or playing the dozens, White teachers interpret this as genuine arguments and the

young men more than likely end up in the principal's office for some form of punishment as a result (Lomotey, 1990; Majors, 1986).

Lomotey (1990) suggested that it appears that White teachers and administrators feel threatened by young Black males who simply "tell it like it is." This is especially true when it is the teacher and not the student who is wrong (Kochman, 1981; Majors, 1986).

Conflict between the Black male and school authorities tends to heighten the anger and hostility that so many Black youth try to hide and/or control. In turn, this smoldering anger will often cause the youngster to become sullen, rebellious, and in many cases violent. He then ends up being expelled or placed in special education for emotional behavior. In other words, the very behavior that he tries to adopt to maintain his cool will often be the cause of his suspension or expulsion (Lomotey, 1990; Majors, 1986).

Discipline of African Americans

School suspension is not a new issue. Rather, suspension of students from school has been a subject of considerable public debate in recent years (Achilles et al., 1982; Campbell et al., 1982; The Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Harris & Bennett, 1982; Neill, 1976; Russell, 1985; Williams, 1989).

In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court in two separate decisions stated that students facing temporary suspension have property and liberty interests substantial enough to qualify them for protection under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The first decision (*Goss v. Lopez*, as cited in Wu, 1982) mandated minimum

due process procedures for students in suspensions cases, and the second (*Wood v. Strickland*, as cited in Wu, 1982) made school boards liable for damages in such cases. The Supreme Court's affirmation of the rights of students to due process was applauded by those who advocate reforms in disciplinary practices at schools (Wu, 1982).

Other issues besides the general question of procedural due process make suspension a subject of public debate (Achilles et al., 1982; Campbell et al., 1982; Williams, 1989). Suspension attracts considerable national attention because of the possibility of discrimination, especially racial discrimination; this has been pointed out by civil rights and child advocacy groups.

The Children's Defense Fund (1975) in two well-known reports asserts that minority pupils, especially Black pupils, have been suspended at a rate highly disproportionate to their total enrollment. The disproportionately high suspension rate for Blacks and other minorities, in comparison to that for Whites, is considered evidence of racial discrimination in disciplinary actions.

The reports indicated that Blacks in elementary school were suspended three times as often as Whites (1.5% versus 0.5%) and in secondary school twice as often (11.8% versus 6.0%). In elementary as well as secondary schools boys were suspended at higher rates than girls (5.4% versus 3.4%) (The Children's Defense Fund, 1975, p. 61).

The reports indicated that not only were Blacks suspended at a higher rate but they were also suspended for longer periods of time than White students. Black students had an average suspension of 4.46 days compared to 3.55 days for White students. The Black students (27%)

were repeatedly suspended three or more times, compared to 11% of White students who were suspended repeatedly. Black students represent approximately 25% of the school population; approximately 40% of the total number of students suspended or expelled from school were Black (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1987).

Even without statistical information, it should be clear that while students are suspended for misbehavior or for violation of school rules, not all the misbehaving students experience suspension. Misbehavior such as smoking at school could be grounds for suspension, but not all smoking on school grounds leads to suspension. This means that there are other factors involved (Achilles et al., 1982; Williams, 1989).

Wu (1982) contended that the extent of student suspension is affected by the extent of the teachers' personal interest in students. The results of his study show that the schools where teachers are less personally interested in students suspend more of their students. This suggests that in schools with high suspension rates, a larger fraction of the entire student body sees the teachers as uninterested. This interpretation means that uninterested teachers have an impact on student suspension. It implies that some students would not have been suspended if teachers had a greater interest in them personally.

Some consider higher rates of suspension among minority students to be simply a product of more misbehavior at school. Others suggest that disproportionate suspension rates for minorities could be better explained by the fact that schools are middle-class institutions with middle-class people teaching and administering them. It is the different cultural orientation of the largely low socioeconomic status

minority students, in conflict with the middle-class orientation of the school, that explains their higher suspension rate, not racial bias. Still others consider that academic records, not race, are the better explanation of student suspension, since regardless of race, most suspended students are academically deficient (Neill, 1976).

Suspension is warranted in those cases where the presence of the student in the school poses a danger to the safety of others. In many cases, this is not the case and Black males in particular are suspended for reasons that have nothing to do with the safety of others.

Opponents of suspension emphasized the plight of students during the period out of school as (a) the traumatic feeling of loss of self-respect and of being unwanted, (b) the increasing chance of coming into contact with a delinquent subculture, (c) the vicious cyclical effects of being unable to catch up with school work, and (d) the stigma among peers after suspension (Williams, 1989). They have also argued that suspended students have frequently become school dropouts. The severely damaging consequences of suspension is seen to greatly outweigh whatever potential disciplinary value it has.

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suspended if teachers had a greater interest in them personally (Wu, 1982).

In the past decade the mass media have also reported innumerable scandals involving middle-class White youth: mass cheating on college campuses, widespread shoplifting in suburban malls, sophisticated computer sabotage by "computer whizzes," cocaine addiction among "yuppie professionals," and gang rapes by athletes and fraternity boys at elite colleges. It is obvious that many of the "best and brightest" are quite capable of lying, cheating, stealing, getting drunk, getting stoned, and assaulting women. However, should they get caught breaking any laws or violating any norms, they are much less likely than Black youth to be expelled from school, arrested, or convicted for a crime, and barred for life from any meaningful employment because of a criminal record. To the contrary, their behavior is more likely to be attributed to momentary lapses of judgment, which naturally occurs because "boys will be boys" or they are just "going through a phase." Even if they are punished for their transgressions, they will still usually manage to overcome these temporary setbacks and will graduate from college, obtain coveted jobs, and fulfill their manifest destiny: to be the future leaders of America by virtue of their race, class, and education (Gibbs, 1988).

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Teacher/Student Interaction

In a study of the relationship between race and teacher expectations (Beady & Hansell, 1981), it was concluded that teacher race was strongly associated with expectations for students' future success in college. Black teachers had significantly higher expectations for their students than White teachers in both low- and high-achieving Black schools.

This optimism, relates Beady and Hansell (1981), might be a result of Black teachers' own successful experience in college, a wish to provide well motivated and encouraging role models, a stronger belief that their students are capable, or a belief that affirmative action policies now make it possible for more Black students to enter and graduate from college.

Kramer (1991) found that student's perceptions of their relationships with teachers affect their academic achievement. She also indicated that low-achieving students felt that teachers were uncaring, and that what little oral interaction there was between them and the teacher was almost always of a negative nature. The students revealed that if they were contemplating dropping out of school that there was not a teacher or counselor to whom they would go to discuss their feelings.

Hale-Benson (1986) asserted that students who demonstrate an ability to anticipate a person's behavior and prepare an appropriate response are seen as more "teachable." In other words, most teachers prefer to work with children whose conduct and appearance is in line with their perception of what is "appropriate." Once such behavior is

exhibited by the student during classroom lessons, teachers will typically try to reinforce it while engaged in teaching activities by providing contingent rewards and corrective feedback.

Some of the most common behavioral signals (or social "etiquette") that teachers expect to see are that the pupil can and will rather readily engage in quiet social interaction, ask questions, and otherwise participate in class, be obedient, use standard English when speaking, accept personal responsibility for conduct and be accountable for its consequences, be mindful of his or her appearance and hygiene, perform tasks actively and harmoniously interact with others in the classroom, and accept the teacher's right to treat him or her as a member of a category based on a few discrete personal characteristics (such as, skin color, attractiveness, family background, classroom social personality, and previous teacher evaluations) rather than the full range of characteristics of the whole person (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Black children are particularly at risk for being overlooked because of a nonrecognition of Afro-American culture and the strengths that emerge from that culture. Skills that emerge from Black culture are only recognized when they are extraordinary and marketable to the capitalist ecosystem such as the athletic skills of Michael Jordan or the musical skills of Michael Jackson. When these skills are exhibited in early childhood as a part of a pattern, that if nurtured could support the self-esteem and achievement of Black children, they are virtually ignored (Gallien, 1992; Hale-Benson, 1986; Kramer, 1991).

The question of IQ is especially relevant to a discussion of the educational experience of African American students. Just as schools

are structured to dovetail well with the home life of White, middle-class society, the standardized tests that measure school achievement and determine class placement embody the value system experience of the largely White, middle-class people who design them. Hence, it is not unusual for such tests to underestimate the abilities and experience of African American youngsters if only because they do not measure, by and large, many of the things Black youngsters routinely learn (Hilliard, 1976; Lomotey, 1990).

Others (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Gallien, 1992; Hale-Benson, 1986; Kunjufu, 1986) have argued that the personality damage resulting from their exposure to prejudice and discrimination explains why Black students perform so poorly in school. According to this point of view, Black children are locked in cycles of low self-esteem, defeat, hopelessness, and frustration. Because of these attitudes and associated self-conceptions, they lack the motivation necessary to perform well in school.

Glasgow (1980) conducted a study of 30 African American males that tends to substantiate the conclusions of Kunjufu (1986), Fordham and Ogbu (1986), Hale-Benson (1986), and Gallien (1992). The subjects were high school dropouts. Between the ages of 14 and 17, all but 6 of the 30 left school (the majority in the 12th grade). Either they quit or they were expelled because of "disruptive and antisocial behavior," "argumentativeness," aggressive confrontation of instructors, and truancy.

According to the men in the study, the teachers and the educational materials had expected them to adopt paths to success and

forms of behavior with which they were largely unfamiliar and which had little association with their daily lives. "It was as if everything being taught was new, strange, and didn't seem to have any use" (Glasgow, 1980, p. 57). Most of the stories they read and the examples given in the books or by the teachers were about another society, the White world. To them, mainstream society was different, if not unnatural. In attempting to explain this feeling, without any special anger, one man said "We don't live there; we don't live like that, and, man, they are just different" (Glasgow, 1980, p. 57). Another summed up his feelings with this statement: "I don't need the man [the teacher] to tell me directly that my way of life is uncivilized, but I know what he's putting down; I ain't nobody's fool" (Glasgow, 1980, p. 58).

The literature substantiates the notion that African American males are suspended at a disproportionate rate in comparison to other students, and that African American males in particular are often suspended from school for culture-specific behaviors rather than specifically violating school rules/policies.

The question then is how can the majority of African American males be expected to achieve under these circumstances and how can it be ensured that they be given a truly equal opportunity so that they can achieve in school?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of the study was to determine if the climate of an African American high school, as perceived by students, with African American administration and faculty contributed to the self-identity and academic achievement of African American males. The study explored the senior males' perception of the climate of the school in an effort to describe and explore the relationships between faculty and students.

Sample Description

The subjects chosen for this study were 12th-grade African American males located in a large Midwestern state. Twelfth-graders were chosen because the researcher felt that having been in high school for 4 years and near graduation, they would be able to describe how they were influenced to remain in school and strive for academic excellence.

Demographics

The community is considered to be primarily blue-collar as a result of a large steel company in its midst. The community has suffered from a state of economic stagnation for the past decade as a result of the national decline of the steel industry. Public education is one of the

largest and most stable employers of the area. The sample district includes four low rental housing neighborhoods with pockets of semi-affluence in near-by areas.

The school district is comprised of 43 public schools that consist of 6 senior high schools, 6 middle schools, and 31 elementary and specialized schools. Student population totals 23,000 with a professional staff of 1,600.

The school is classified as a Division I school and has a population of 1,600 students of which 99% are African American. Forty-seven percent of the student population is classified as indigent with close to 60% coming from single-parent households. Approximately 14% of the student body use the special education services. The overall graduation rate was approximately 78%, with the dropout rate for males being approximately 20-25%. The school experienced a 14% increase in honor roll designees during the current school year.

Instrument

The instrument selected for the study was the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 1987) Student Satisfaction Survey. This survey measures the perceptions of students within the school environment. The instrument provides data about student perceptions employing eight subscales:

1. Teachers: Student satisfaction with the professional behaviors of teachers (seven items).
2. Fellow Students: Student satisfaction with peer group relationships (five items).

3. Schoolwork: Student satisfaction with the range of courses and the nature of classwork in the school (six items).

4. Student Activities: Student satisfaction with the number and types of school-sponsored activities and with opportunities for student participation (five items).

5. Student Discipline: Student satisfaction with the degree to which the school is an orderly and safe environment (six items).

6. Decision-Making Opportunities: Student satisfaction with opportunities to provide input on decisions about curriculum, school events, and so forth (five items).

7. School Buildings, Supplies, and Upkeep: Student satisfaction with the quality and availability of library resources, learning materials and supplies, and with the upkeep of the buildings and grounds (six items).

8. Communication: Student satisfaction with the availability of information and opportunities to communicate with others about school events (six items).

The researcher chose to employ only five of the subscales for this particular study: Teachers, Student Discipline, Schoolwork, Decision-making Opportunities, and Communication.

The items under teacher satisfaction included: how well teachers understand my problems; how often teachers tell me when I do good work; how much teachers help me when I am having trouble; how much teachers make me want to learn new things; how much teachers help me with my schoolwork; how much my teachers seem to enjoy teaching; and how I feel, in general, about my teachers.

Student Discipline satisfaction included: how safe I feel at school; how well students behave in class; how well students behave in the school; how well school rules are enforced; how well students do what is expected without being told; and how I feel, in general, about student discipline in my school.

The items under the subscale of Schoolwork included: the choices I have in picking classes; how much my classes challenge me; the number of tests I have; how much my schoolwork is exciting; the amount of homework I have; and how I feel, in general, about my classes and schoolwork.

Decision-Making Opportunities included: the importance of meetings that students are invited to attend; how much opportunity students have to comment on courses that are offered; how much influence the student council has in suggesting school events; how well school administrators listen to student ideas; and how I (the student) feels, in general, about my personal opportunity to help make decisions at my school.

The items included under the heading of Communication included: how easy it is for me to find out about new and important things at school; how easy it is for me to talk to teachers outside the classroom; how much I am told about what is happening at the school; how much time I spend talking with other kids about classes and school activities; how easy it is to talk with the principal or other school administrators; and how I feel, in general, about relating to people and things at my school.

The NASSP Satisfaction Surveys

This set of surveys consists of three instruments that measure the satisfaction of teachers, students, and parents. In this study, however, the researcher chose to survey only students and excluded the input of the parents and teachers. Information regarding the perceptions and input of parents and teachers is important. However, the researcher was interested, in this instance, primarily with what takes place within the school environment through the eyes of students.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Reliability

Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) has been calculated for each subscale based on data collected in pilot and normative studies. These indices provide an estimate of the degree to which items on a given subscale are similar in meaning. The average internal consistency reliability of the climate subscales is 0.81, with a range from 0.67 to 0.92 (NASSP, 1987).

Validity

Two types of validation are relevant to the NASSP surveys--content and construct validity.

Content validity is concerned with the extent to which items on an instrument are representative of the domains of interest. Existing definitions and measurements of role group satisfaction in schools were relatively cohesive, so development of the three satisfaction surveys was

grounded in a shared understanding of content. Dimensions or components of satisfaction were identified for each group; and principals, researchers, and graduate students reviewed the items and tested their conceptual fit within these categories. This process ensured that the surveys would have face validity as well as content validity.

Construct validity is concerned with the meaningfulness of a test. The NASSP Task Force treated the construct of satisfaction as multidimensional. They produced position papers and reviews of instrumentation related to key variables of the Interactive Model of the School Environment. The Task Force placed great emphasis during instrument development on scale and item conceptualization to ensure strong construct validity. Extensive exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in field testing the instrument identified clusters of related items. Only those clusters and items with strong factor loadings were retained. The groups of closely related items were scored and interpreted as scales. Factor analysis of field test versions verified the a priori structure of the NASSP Satisfaction Survey.

Measurement

The NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey employs a six-response Likert scale. Items received score values of 1 (strongly disagree, very dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly agree, very satisfied). The respondents' scores on each item were the same as the Likert response value (1 to 5). All items were regularly scored; there was no reverse scoring. Items that were marked 6 (don't know) were not included in the scoring.

The mean scores of the national group were used as a point of

reference for the mean scores of the sample population. In addition to mean scores the NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey instrument also included a standard score that relates the individual school's results to the results of the national sample that was used to obtain the norms for the survey. The average standard score is 50. About two-thirds of all schools have standard scores between 40 and 60. Schools scoring between 40 and 60 are considered to be typical of schools nationally (NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey, 1987).

Instrument Administration Procedures

The survey was administered at the end of the school year. Per arrangements with the principal, the students were assembled together and given a brief review of the purpose and objectives of the study in which they had agreed to participate.

Instructions for the completion of the questionnaire were read by the researcher. Students were reminded that their participation was strictly voluntary and that they were not bound to answer any question(s) with which they felt any discomfort.

The questionnaires, answer sheets, and pencils were then passed out to the students. Students were asked to complete Section 1, skip Section 2, and complete Sections 3 and 4. They were instructed to skip Section 5 and to complete Sections 6 and 7. They were then given instructions for completing Section 8.

The completed answer sheets and questionnaires were collected and returned to the researcher, who then thanked all of the students for their participation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Participants

The senior class consisted of 244 students, of which 81 were males. Sixty-one African American male seniors participated in and completed the study. Forty-seven (77%) of the participants reported that they had been accepted at or intended to enroll in college in the fall. Twenty-three (38%) students came from two-parent homes, 26 (43%) from single-parent homes, and the remaining 12 (20%) did not report their head of household status. Please see Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association
of Secondary School Principals' Student
Satisfaction Survey: Teachers^a

	School			National	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Total sample	61	23.3	5.5	24.0	4.9

Note. N = number of participants. SD = standard deviation.

^aTeachers: Student satisfaction with the professional behaviors of teachers.

Table 1 shows that the mean score of the total sample population is only 0.7 lower than the mean of the national group.

Table 2
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association
of Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction
Survey: Teachers According to Subgroups

Subgroup	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>SS</u>
College-bound	47	23.0	5.6	49
Non-college-bound	6	27.3	3.6	56
Unreported	7	21.5	4.9	45
Two-parent home	23	25.2	5.4	50
One-parent home	26	24.5	6.6	49
Unreported	11	21.5	4.3	45
GPA 3.0/above	6	26.7	5.1	55
GPA Below 3.0	36	23.3	5.9	49
GPA unreported	17	21.8	4.3	46
4 years	34	19.3	5.4	50
2-3 years	9	17.6	6.7	46
Unreported	18	21.4	4.2	45

Note. N = number of participants. SD = standard deviation. SS = standard score.

Results of the Survey

The results include the data of several populations: the total sample population, students who reported being college-bound, students who reported that they were non-college-bound, students who did not report their college intent, students from two-parent homes, students from single-parent homes, and students who did not report their head of household status. The study also examined the perceptions of satisfaction of those students who

had attended the school for 4 years or more and compared those perceptions to those who had attended less than 4 years (see Tables 3-10).

Table 3
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of
Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction
Survey: Student Discipline^a

	School			National	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Total sample	60	18.3	5.8	20.1	4.6

^aStudent discipline: Student satisfaction with the degree to which the school is an orderly and safe environment.

Table 4
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of Secondary
School Principals' Student Satisfaction Survey:
Student Discipline According to Subgroups

Subgroup	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>SS</u>
College-bound	47	17.6	5.6	45
Non-college-bound	6	22.9	4.4	56
Unreported/college	7	18.6	6.9	47
Two-parent home	23	17.9	5.4	50
One-parent home	26	20.4	5.1	43
Unreported	11			
2-3 years	9	17.6	6.7	45
GPA 3.0/above	6	22.5	5.5	55
Below 3.0	36	17.9	5.4	46
No GPA report	17	18.2	6.3	46

Table 5
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association
of Secondary School Principals' Student
Satisfaction Survey: Schoolwork^a

	School			National	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Total sample	60	19.8	5.0	18.8	4.4

^aSchoolwork: Student satisfaction with the range of courses and the nature of classwork in the school.

Table 6
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of
Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction
Survey: Schoolwork According to Subgroups

Subgroup	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>SS</u>
College-bound	47	19.4	4.9	51
Non-college bound	6	22.1	4.8	57
Unreported	7	20.2	5.8	53
Two-parent home	23	20.9	4.6	52
One-parent home	26	21.0	5.6	53
Unreported	11	18.7	5.3	50
GPA 3.0/above	6	23.6	3.7	61
GPA Below 3.0	36	19.6	5.0	51
GPA unreported	17	19.1	5.1	50

Table 7
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of
Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction
Survey: Decision-Making Opportunities^a

	School			National	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Total sample	60	16.2	4.3	15.0	4.5

^aDecision-making opportunities: Student satisfaction with opportunities to provide input on decisions about curriculum, school events, and so forth.

Table 8
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of
Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction
Survey: Decision-Making Opportunities
According to Subgroups

Subgroup	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>SS</u>
College-bound	47	16.2	4.2	52
Non-college-bound	6	17.8	3.1	56
Unreported	7	15.4	5.1	50
Two-parent home	23	17.2	3.7	53
One-parent home	26	17.2	4.1	53
Unreported	11	15.4	4.5	50
GPA 3.0/above	6	17.9	4.0	56
GPA below 3.0	36	16.3	4.3	52
Unreported	17	15.6	4.7	51

Table 9
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association
of Secondary School Principals' Student
Satisfaction Survey: Communication^a

	School			National	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Total sample	60	19.2	5.8	20.5	4.8

^aCommunication: Student satisfaction with the availability of information and opportunities to communicate with others about school events.

Table 10
Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of
Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction
Survey: Communication According to Subgroups

Subgroup	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>SS</u>
College-bound	47	19.1	5.8	48
Non-college-bound	6	20.7	4.6	50
Unreported	7	18.9	7.3	47
Two-parent home	23	20.3	4.7	48
One-parent home	26	19.6	6.2	48
Unreported	11	18.5	5.5	46
GPA 3.0/above	6	22.8	4.8	54
GPA below 3.0	36	19.0	5.7	47
GPA unreported	17	18.7	5.9	47

Table 11 reveals that in all five areas of the study those students from single-parent households had mean scores that were similar to those from two-parent households.

Table 11

Comparative Mean Ratings of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Student Satisfaction Survey:
Students From Single Heads of Household
Versus Two-Parent Households

	One-parent household mean	Two-parent household mean	Total sample population mean
Teacher	24.5	25.2	23.3
Schoolwork	21.0	20.9	19.8
Discipline	20.4	17.9	18.3
Decision making	17.2	17.2	16.2
Communication	19.6	20.3	19.2

Data Analysis Procedures

Introduction

The analyses of the data were achieved by employing a two-sample t test. The .05 alpha (level of significance) was listed to test the null hypotheses. The t test for equality of means was used to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1

H_a : The African American male seniors will show greater satisfaction with teachers than the national normative group.

H_o : There will be no difference between the satisfaction with teachers for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Hypothesis 2

H_a : The African American male seniors will show greater satisfaction with schoolwork than the national normative group.

H_o : There will be no difference between the satisfaction with schoolwork for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Hypothesis 3

H_a : African American male seniors' scores for student discipline will be greater than discipline scores for the national group.

H_o : There will be no difference between the satisfaction with student discipline for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Hypothesis 4

H_a : The African American male seniors will show greater satisfaction with decision-making opportunities than the national normative group.

H_o : There will be no difference between the satisfaction with decision-making opportunities for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Hypothesis 5

H_a : The African American male seniors will show greater satisfaction with communication than the national normative group.

H_0 : There will be no difference between the satisfaction with communication for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Hypothesis 6

H_a : The mean of the student satisfaction with discipline will be different between the African American male seniors coming from two-parent households and those African American male seniors from single-parent households.

H_0 : There will be no difference between the mean of the student satisfaction with discipline for the African American male seniors coming from two-parent households and those African American male seniors coming from single-parent households.

Results of the Tests of the Hypotheses

Results of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference between the satisfaction with teachers for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Since the obtained probability of .44 was greater than the established .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant difference (see Table 12).

Table 12
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With Teachers

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Sample population	60	24.1	5.5	0.16	.44
National group	5,632	24.0	4.9		

*p < .05.

Results of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: There will be no difference between the satisfaction with schoolwork for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Since the obtained probability of .003 was smaller than the established .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected. The mean of the sample population is significantly higher than the normative group mean, which is verified by the t value of 2.82.

Table 13
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With Schoolwork

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Sample population	60	20.4	5.0	2.82	.003*
National group	6,602	18.8	4.9		

*p < .05.

Results of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference between the satisfaction with student discipline for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

The obtained probability of .0012 was smaller than the established .05 alpha level; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The mean of the sample population is lower than the normative group mean, which is verified by the *t* value of 1.96 (see Table 14).

Table 14
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With Discipline

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i>
Sample population	60	18.3	5.8	1.96	.0012*
National group	6,404	20.1	4.6		

**p* < .05.

Results of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4: There will be no difference between the satisfaction with decision-making opportunities for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Since the obtained probability of .001 was smaller than the .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected. The mean of the sample population is higher than the normative group mean (see Table 15).

Table 15
t Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With
Decision-Making Opportunities

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Sample population	60	16.8	4.3	3.1	.001 *
National group	5,460	15.0	4.5		

*p < .05.

Results of Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5: There will be no difference between the satisfaction with communication for African American male seniors and the national normative group.

Based upon the p value of .0645, which is greater than the .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference is accepted (see Table 16).

Table 16
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction
With Communication

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Sample population	60	19.5	5.8	-1.54	.0645
National group	6,042	20.5	4.8		

*p < .05.

Results of Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6: There will be no difference between the mean of the student satisfaction with discipline for the African American male seniors coming from two-parent households and those African American male seniors coming from single-parent households.

Since the obtained probability of .10 was greater than the established .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was accepted (see Table 17).

Since the obtained probability of .70 was greater than the established .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was accepted (see Table 18).

Table 17
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With Discipline

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	SE of mean	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Single-parent	26	20.4	5.1	1.002	1.68	.10
Two-parent	23	17.9	5.4	1.118		

*p < .05.

Table 18
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With Teachers

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	SE of mean	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Single-parent	26	24.5	6.6	1.2	-0.39	.70
Two-parent	23	25.2	5.4	1.1		

*p < .05.

Since the obtained probability of .93 was greater than the established .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was accepted (see Table 19).

Table 19
t Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With Schoolwork

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	SE of mean	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Single-parent	26	21.0	5.6	1.10	.09	.93
Two-parent	23	20.9	4.6	0.95		

*p < .05.

Since the obtained probability of .98 was greater than the established .05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was accepted (see Table 20).

Table 20
t-Test Analysis: Student Satisfaction With
Decision-Making Opportunities

Group	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	SE of mean	<u>t</u> value	<u>p</u>
Single-parent	26	17.2	4.1	0.800	-0.02	.98
Two-parent	23	17.2	3.7	0.780		

*p < .05.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Research has indicated that minority children in general and African American males, in particular, experience a higher dropout and expulsion rate than other student populations. One of the reasons cited for the higher dropout rate is the high level of dissatisfaction with school that is often influenced by covert racism on the part of faculty members and administrators.

The dissatisfaction with school as experienced by minority children is often associated with but not limited to the following areas: teacher/student relations, student discipline, schoolwork, decision making, and communication. It is imperative that some semblance of student satisfaction be maintained because satisfaction is one of the variables that both influence and corroborate school success.

Discussion of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing

The results of this present study, as shown in Tables 12 through 16, indicate that the level of student satisfaction among the sample population was equal to and in some instances higher than the satisfaction of the national group whose scores were used as a point of reference.

The area of satisfaction with teachers dealt with how well the

teachers understand the students' problems; how often teachers tell students when they do good work; how much the teachers help them when they are having trouble; how much the teachers make them want to learn new things; how much teachers help them with their school-work; how much the teachers seem to enjoy teaching; and how the students feel, in general, about their teachers.

The level of satisfaction with teachers for the African American males in the study was almost identical to the level of satisfaction of the national group. The highest possible score for very happy/satisfied was a score of 35 and the highest score for happy/satisfied was 28. Therefore, the score of 23.3 for the sample group was a positive score.

Table 2 shows that those students who were non-college-bound had a mean score of 27.3, which was higher than that of the total sample population and those students with GPA below 3.0 had mean scores of satisfaction that was equal to the total sample group score.

The satisfaction with discipline was greater for the national group than for the African American male sample population. However, it is noteworthy that although the level of satisfaction with discipline was lower for the African American males than for the national group, the African American males' level of satisfaction was not low enough to be considered unhappy/dissatisfied (a score of 12 or below) and as indicated in Table 3 the African American males had a mean score of 18.3.

Table 4 shows that those students who reported that they were not going to college had a higher absolute score (22.9) than the sample population score (18.3), and those students who reported a GPA below 3.0 had a score of 17.9.

The area of satisfaction with schoolwork dealt with the choices that students had in picking classes, how much the classes challenged the students, the number of tests given, how much the schoolwork was exciting, the amount of homework given, and how the students felt, in general, about their classes and schoolwork.

The results of the study, as indicated in Table 13, revealed that in the area of schoolwork the African American males had a greater level of satisfaction than the national group. It is logical to think that when students are satisfied with their schoolwork and all that it entails, that they tend to be more successful academically than when they are dissatisfied with the schoolwork.

As indicated in Table 6, those students who were non-college-bound had a higher score for satisfaction with schoolwork (22.1) than the total sample population (18.3), and those with a GPA below 3.0 had a score of 19.6.

Satisfaction with decision-making opportunities included the importance of meetings that students were invited to attend; how much opportunity students had to comment on courses that were offered; how much influence the student council had in suggesting school events; how well school administrators listen to student ideas; and how the students felt, in general, about their opportunities to help make decisions at their school.

Decision-making opportunities are important because it allows the student to feel that he or she plays a role in what transpires in his or her school. This is one of the mechanisms by which students can be made to feel that they are either important to the school or unimportant to the

school.

Establishing a sense of self-worth is vital to the emotional well-being of any child and the opportunity to participate in decision making is a perfect opportunity to facilitate such an establishment. To be excluded from the decision-making process in public education is damaging because the message that students receive from such exclusion is that although school is supposed to be for them and about them they are not considered to be important enough to have input in the decisions that directly impact upon them.

In the case of African American children, exclusion from the decision-making process is one more piece of the whole picture that says, "Whatever you may think or feel doesn't count here." That is a very powerful message and is capable of having a very negative impact upon the affected student's self-worth. If one's thoughts, ideas, and feelings are considered to be unimportant, what does that say about the importance or worthiness of the person?

The results of the study as indicated in Table 15 show that African American males had a greater level of satisfaction with decision-making opportunities than the national group. The highest possible score was a mean of 20. The African American males had a score of 16.8 and the national group had a score of 15.0. As shown in Table 8, students who were non-college-bound had a score of 17.8 and those with a GPA below 3.0 had a score of 16.3.

The area of communication included how easy it is for students to find out about new and important things at school; how easy it is for the students to talk to teachers outside the classroom; how much the

student is told about what is happening at the school; how much time the students spend talking with other kids about classes and school activities; how easy it is to talk with the principal or other school administrators; and how the student feels, in general, about relating to people and things at their school.

Communication is an area that is vitally important to the development of any type of relationship, whether it is between parents and children or between peers and friends. Researchers (Hale-Benson, 1986) have indicated that there is not a lot of communication between teachers and African American children outside of the classroom and that African American high schoolers do not find it easy, in general, to talk to their teachers and administrators.

The test results as indicated in Table 16 revealed that there was no statistical difference between the level of satisfaction with communication for African American males and that of the national group. The absolute mean score for African American males was actually lower than the score for the national group. Both groups did have scores that were very close to the highest score possible for communication (20), which translates to happy/satisfied.

Table 9 shows that those students who reported that they were not going to college had higher mean scores of satisfaction with communication than the overall sample population.

Single-Parent and Two-Parent Households

American society has developed a negative stereotype of those students coming from single parent households. Such students are said

to be less disciplined and more likely to drop out of school or be suspended/expelled. Students coming from single-parent households have been labeled as being more likely to experience greater failure in school than those coming from two-parent households.

The perceptions of the satisfaction of African American males from two-parent households were compared to the perceptions of African American males from single-parent households for the purpose of trying to determine if there was a discernible difference between the perceptions of the two groups.

The test results, as indicated in Tables 17 through 20, show that there was no statistical difference between the two groups in their level of satisfaction in all five areas of testing. This is noteworthy in light of the swell in the opinion that single-parent households is a primary contributor to the poor academic achievement of African American students in public education.

The highest possible score for satisfaction with teachers was 28, which equaled happy/satisfied. The African American males from two-parent households had a mean score of 25.2 and the African American males from single-parent households had a score of 24.5.

The African American males from two-parent households scored 17.9 on the level of satisfaction with student discipline and those from single-parent households scored 20.4 on the level of student satisfaction with discipline.

The scores were almost equal on the satisfaction with schoolwork with a score of 20.9 for the two-parent group and 21.0 for the single-parent group, as well as the score for satisfaction with communication

which was 19.3 for single-parent households and 19.2 for two-parent households. The scores for satisfaction with decision-making opportunities were identical, 17.2 for each group.

There were seven areas listed and defined as barriers to the academic achievement of African American students in public education. Namely, racial inequality, segregation between schools, segregation within schools, cultural insensitivity to learning styles, self-concept, discipline, and teacher/student interaction. Those concerns were not evident at the school that participated in the study.

Racial inequality was not seen as a barrier to academic achievement by virtue of the racial makeup of the school. Test results revealed that the students were happy/satisfied with their teachers, schoolwork, decision-making opportunities, and communication. They were not unhappy with student discipline, which is an area that is cited as being the primary source of expulsions and dropping out of school for African American males.

The scores for student satisfaction with teachers, schoolwork, decision-making opportunities, and communication seem to indicate that the self-concept of the students in the sample population is not a barrier to academic achievement. The sample population had positive scores in all of those areas.

It is of importance to note that one of the issues of minority students in public education is that too often their teachers do not show positive regard for them as individuals. Not only do teachers not interact with them outside the classroom, but in many instances the teachers do not show them the same respect and positive regard within the

classroom as is shown to White students in the same classroom (Glasgow, 1980).

Conclusion

The results of the study reveal that the students of this African American high school with African American administrators and majority African American faculty display a positive level of satisfaction with their school environment. Many of the barriers to academic achievement of African American students that exist in predominantly White schools do not appear to be evident based upon the perceptions of the students.

It is interesting to note that those students who have been determined as being the most at risk of failure, namely, those from single-parent households and low GPAs, all had strong scores of satisfaction in all the given areas of the survey. In fact, those from single-parent households had better absolute scores than those from two-parent households even though they were not statistically different.

It would appear that those things that are conducive to the academic achievement of African American males are taking place in this particular school environment. They are taking place in spite of the fact that many of the students come from low-income families and reside in housing projects.

The school has implemented a number of initiatives to motivate students to remain in school and to increase their level of achievement. Those initiatives included: the posting of the school's Mission and Vision statements, a program called Student Achievement Incentive, African American Infusion Cadre, a student suggestion box, pre-SAT classes, a

program entitled Student Involvement in Learning Process, 21st Century Scholars, Workshops on R.A.P.S. Discipline, and all male/all female assemblies. The school is included in a community effort entitled "One church one school."

The staff places special emphasis on creative lesson plans, teaching essential skills, hands-on activities, cooperative learning, interdisciplinary teaching, and the teaching of critical thinking.

The school has traditionally been supported by industries of the area such as the USX Corporation, Northern Indiana Public Service Company, NBD Bank, County Welfare Department, Mental Health Department, Boys and Girls Club, YWCA, and the Youth Services Bureau.

This particular school is steeped in tradition. A conversation with the principal of the school revealed that he, his secretary, some of the counselors, and many of the teaching staff were alumni of the school. Many of the students had parents, grandparents, and other relatives whose pictures hung on the walls and whose names were inscribed on trophies in showcases throughout the building. There is a sense of pride there that is so strong that it is almost tangible.

The researcher had the occasion to speak with two young men who were college graduates and had both graduated from this particular high school. They described an upbringing that resembled the "village concept," and demonstrated a very strong sense of identity and self-confidence. When asked about the source of these characteristics, their response was that they attributed them to their teachers at this high school. They stated that their teachers simply expected the best out of them and would not settle for anything less. They felt that they were

part of a tradition and were expected to conduct themselves accordingly. One of them is a successful newspaper reporter who writes plays and poetry in his spare time and the other is the manager for a large drug-store chain.

It appears that in spite of all of the negative things taking place in the surrounding area of the school, inside the building something is happening that holds a beacon of light and hope not only for the African American males but also for all the students who enter its doors.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to determine if what goes on in an African American high school with African American administration and faculty impacts the achievement of African American males. In light of the limitations of this particular study, It is recommended that further studies be conducted in this area that would include the perceptions of teachers and parents as well as those of the students. It is further recommended that the same type of study be conducted in predominantly White high schools and that comparisons be made between the perceptions of the African American males in the White schools and those of the African American males in the African American schools.

It is further recommended that future studies examine and compare the extent to which the African American males are enrolled in advanced level classes in both types of school settings, the percentages of college-bound students of both settings, and the suspension/expulsion percentages of both types of schools.

Lastly, a study of the comparison of parent involvement and satis-

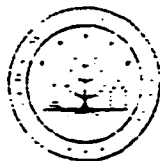
faction at both types of schools would also be of benefit to educators and other stakeholders. When parents are not involved in their children's education academic achievement suffers. Therefore, it is necessary to know why they are not involved in order to determine ways in which to get them more involved.

The purpose of the recommendations are not made in any effort to discredit any particular school but rather as a means of examining the issue of racism in public education openly and honestly. Hopefully some answers will be found that will make the education experience more successful for all students regardless of race or class. It appears that the same type of mind-set that breeds racism also breeds prejudice against those of the lower economic status as well. Such attitudes impede the education and learning experience for those students in the same manner that racism impedes the education process for minorities. Information gleaned from such future studies could improve the education situation in our society which in turn would benefit everyone.

Appendix

Approval Letter From Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-3899
616 387-8293

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

To: Charles Warfield
Loiatean Mason

From: Richard A. Wright, Chair *Richard A. Wright*
Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Subject: HSIRB Project # 96-05-09

Date: May 15, 1996

This is to inform you that your project entitled "Academic Achievement of African American Males," has been approved under the exempt category of research. This approval is based upon your proposal as presented to the HSIRB, and you may utilize human subjects only in accord with this approved proposal.

Your project is approved for a period of one year from the above date. If you should revise any procedures relative to human subjects or materials, you must resubmit those changes for review in order to retain approval. Should any untoward incidents or unanticipated adverse reactions occur with the subjects in the process of this study, you must suspend the study and notify me immediately. The HSIRB will then determine whether or not the study may continue.

Please be reminded that all research involving human subjects must be accomplished in full accord with the policies and procedures of Western Michigan University, as well as all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Any deviation from those policies, procedures, laws or regulations may cause immediate termination of approval for this project.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Project Expiration Date: May 15, 1997

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