

**MALE IDENTITY AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT:
CASE STUDIES OF BLACK MALE COLLEGIANS AT AN
URBAN UNIVERSITY**

by

JERMAINE J. MONK

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Sherri-Ann Butterfield, Ph.D.
and approved by

Sherri-Ann Butterfield, PhD

Jeffrey Backstrand, PhD

Dula Pacquiao, EdD

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ABSTRACT TO THE DISSERTATION

Male Identity and Academic Engagement: Case Studies of Black Male Collegians at an Urban University

By JERMAINE J. MONK

Dissertation Director:

Sherri-Ann Butterfield, Ph.D.

There are numerous theoretical and empirical studies that discuss variables that affect academic outcomes for Black males in higher education. However, few studies specifically investigate the influences of race and gender on academic engagement in post-secondary education settings. This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews to explore the influence of male identity on academic engagement amongst Black males in an urban university. Semi-structured interviews of secondary participants (family, peers, university affiliate and mentor) for each primary participant (Black male collegian) were used to obtain a more comprehensive view of the ways in which the collegians construct their male identity. Exploring the constructed identities of five Black male collegians at an urban university in the Northeast, this dissertation study sought to answer the following primary and secondary research questions: In what ways, do the male identities of Black male collegians influence their academic engagement? and How is Black male identity constructed and operationalized among matriculated undergraduate students? Several findings emanate from this study; however, the two are paramount. Respondents in this study frequently oscillate between competing identities. The

collegians repeatedly chose between identities that promote academic commitment and those that do not; often resulting in diminished engagement. Secondly, levels of academic engagement are linked to self-image prior to matriculation and positive guidance and mentorship once matriculated. The findings suggest that in order to increase the rates of engagement among Black collegians there needs to be a greater number of faculty and administrators who serve as mentors and advisors.

Keywords: Academic Engagement, Black Male Identity, Black Male Matriculation, Identity Formation, Black Men College

DEDICATION

To my aunt, Hazel Alice France, in your memory.

I am because you loved me so. Words cannot express my love and appreciation. I miss you!

To my mother, Hilda 'Cherokee' Monk.

I cannot begin to count your sacrifice on my behalf. I thank, appreciate and LOVE you beyond measure. Thank you for your support and protection.

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You have accepted and treated me as your son. Words cannot express how much I appreciate, love and admire your example. You, undoubtedly, taught me what it means to not only be a man, but a Black man. You were right; education will be my path to success.

I continue....

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Humbly Submitted with Gratitude,

Jermaine J. Monk, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION	1
Case Study Site	4
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Research Questions	7
Origin of the Problem	7
Significance of the Study	13
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW	15
Contemporary Challenges: Black Males in America.....	15
Research on Black Males in Education	18
<i>Black Boys in Schools</i>	21
<i>Black Male Collegians and Male Identity</i>	26
Black Male Identity.....	29

<i>Formation</i>	29
<i>Educational Context</i>	32
Sewell’s Typologies.....	36
<i>Conformist</i>	36
<i>Innovator</i>	38
<i>Retreatist</i>	39
<i>Rebel</i>	40
<i>Hedonist</i>	41
Conceptual Framework	44
<i>Primary Participants</i>	44
Black Male Collegian	44
<i>Secondary Participants</i>	46
Family	45
Peers	47
College Faculty/ Administrator.....	48
Mentors	50
 CHAPTER THREE – METHODS	 53
Research Questions	54
Research Design.....	54
<i>Role of Researcher</i>	57

<i>Sites</i>	58
55	
Participants	61
Data Collection Procedure	64
<i>Interview Guide Approach</i>	68
 CHAPTER FOUR - FINDINGS	72
Introduction	72
Demographic of Participants	72
<i>Zion</i>	75
<i>Luke</i>	75
<i>John</i>	76
<i>Mustafa</i>	76
<i>Josh</i>	76
Themes	77
<i>College is the Only Option</i>	77
<i>Recognize the Standard and Challenge it</i>	79
<i>Street Credibility</i>	81
<i>Covering</i>	84
<i>Emulate from Afar</i>	86
<i>Outcome</i>	88

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS	92
Research Purpose	93
Limitations of Study	94
Summary of Study	96
Discussion	98
<i>College is the Only Option</i>	100
<i>Recognize the Standard and Challenge it</i>	101
<i>Street Credibility</i>	102
<i>Covering</i>	103
<i>Emulate from Afar</i>	105
Significance of the Study	106
Implications for Future Research.....	108
 REFERENCES.....	 111

TABLES AND CHARTS

TABLE 1.1 (MALE RU-N DEGREE CONFERRED	6
TABLE 2.1 (SEWELL TYPOLOGY CHART)	43
TABLE 2.2 (CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK).....	52
TABLE 3.1 (RU-N STUDENTS APPLIED, ADMITTED & ENROLLED).....	60
TABLE 3.2 (SECONDARY PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW CHART).....	63
TABLE 3.3 (PARTICIPANT PARTICIPATION)	67
TABLE 4.1 (PRIMARY PARTICIPANT CHART).....	74

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DATA SHEET	126
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS	129
APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT LETTER	140
APPENDIX D: PRE-PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE	141
APPENDIX E: TYPOLOGY PRE-PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE.....	142
APPENDIX F: CHART OF TYPOLOGY QUESTIONNAIRE	144
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	146

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Education Rates

DANGER! Educated Black Man. On its face the aforementioned statement seems antiquated in what many perceive to be a post-racial society (Warrington, 2009). In the mid-to-late 90s such phrases were printed on t-shirts and bumper stickers to call attention to the contentious state of Black men in America. In the 'Age of Obama,' one could argue that society's former contempt for Black men in America (Warrington, 2009) no longer exists. However, having a Black male in the White House has not curbed the disparities that Black males experience in America. According to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Report (2006) Black males between the ages of 15-29 accounted for 14% of the US male population, but made up 40% of the prison population, experienced unemployment rates as high as 19.5% and made up only 8% of all college graduates. The report *A Call for Change: The social and educational factors contributing to the outcomes of Black males in urban schools* states that as late as 2008, Black males aged 18 and over were imprisoned at a rate 6.5 times greater than that of White males (Lewis, Simon, Uzzell, Horowitz & Casserly, 2010). These statistics cause alarm for Black males for a number of different reasons; but, specifically, as it relates to higher education matriculation, persistence and graduation rates (Lee & Ransom, 2011; Lewis et al., 2010; Strayhorn, 2008c).

According to Dancy (2007), in 1955 Black males composed approximately 55% of all undergraduate enrollments. However, almost 50 years later Harper's report indicated that in 2004, 30 of the nation's 50 public research universities reported that Black males accounted for 500 or fewer total enrollments (2006c). Harper's (2006c) report further states that in 2000, Black males made up only 2.8% of enrolled students in the nation's 50 flagship universities. Why the stark decrease in Black male college enrollment?

Dancy's (2007) research reports that Black male matriculation has steadily been decreasing since 1976. Harper found that about 68% of Black males who start college do not finish within the national average of six years (2006c). Black males have the worst completion rates of any racial or gender group in the US (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2006c; Strayhorn, 2009). The empirical research on Black male academic engagement beyond the post-secondary level is too few in number, but the limited studies that have been done found Black males account for the highest percentage of attrition rates and consistently score below average on standardized tests (Harper, 2012; Lewis et al., 2010, Strayhorn, 2009). Further, the literature is clear, Black male students enter the college classroom with a number of deficiencies (Lee & Ransom, 2011; Lewis et al., 2010; Schott Foundation, 2010).

The research on secondary education and Black male student suspensions, academic disengagement, drop-out and testing performance is extensive (Dancy, 2007; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Ferguson, 2001; Harper, 2006c; Lewis et al., 2010; Lee & Ransom, 2011; Sewell, 1997; Schott Foundation, 2010; Strayhorn, 2008a; 2009). The Schott

Foundation's report on Black male student achievement in all 50 states found that Black male students in middle and high schools are twice as likely to be suspended and three times as likely to be expelled as compared to White males (2010). According to Lee & Ransom at least 12% of Black males between the ages of 18-24 had dropped out of high school (2011). Lee and Ransom further report that, Black males by the 12th grade scored 51% below basic reading levels and 64% below math levels (2011). The Schott Foundation has identified a 29% achievement gap between Black and white male's proficiency in reading, the largest of any other racial or gender group (2010).

Identity in Education

Hunter and Davis contend that unlike males from other racial and ethnic groups “the social construction of Black manhood in mainstream American culture is rooted in the idea of 'Blacks as beasts’” (1992, p. 466). Hunter and Davis' assertion is used as the orientation for this research that Black male collegian academic engagement is not solely an intellectual consequence, but the impact of male identity formation and construction on their abilities. Sewell (1997) in his seminal study argued that Black males have been reduced to three areas: sports, music and crime. As such, Sewell (1997) argues that Black males have to negotiate a hostile environment i.e. the classroom. Wright et al., contend that Black males, in an effort to negotiate the classroom, construct notions of male identity that are “mythical” in nature (1998, pg. 79).

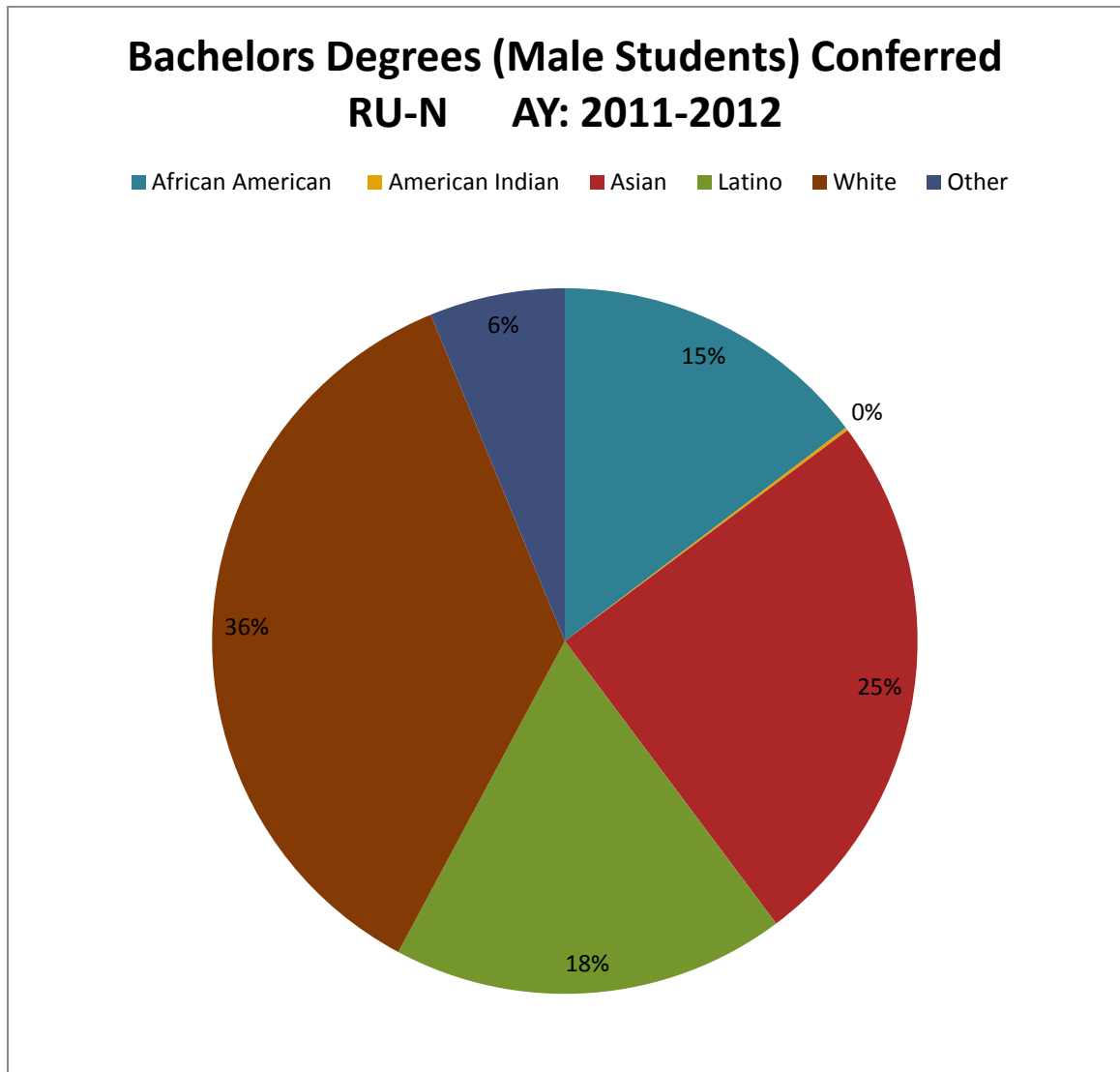
Based on Sewell's (1997) study of Black male students, he identified five male identity archetypes: *conformist, innovator, retreatist, rebel and hedonist*. This dissertation uses a qualitative methodological approach to explore the relationship between academic engagement and male identities amongst five Black male collegians at an urban university.

CASE STUDY SITE

Rutgers-Newark

Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) is one of three Rutgers' campuses in the state of New Jersey. RU-N houses seven schools that offer degree programs from the bachelors to doctorate level. RU-N conferred 70 doctoral degrees, approximately 1300 graduate degrees and 1600 undergraduate degrees during the 2011-2012 academic year (Rutgers, 2014-2015). RU-N has consistently been ranked #1 in student diversity by *U.S. News and World Report*. The campus occupies approximately 38 acres in Downtown Newark, New Jersey. Approximately 1300 students are reported to live on the RU-N campus. Nearly all RU-N students are in state residents (95%) versus out-of-state (5%) (Rutgers, 2014-2015). RU-N has a full-time faculty of 585, of which 99% are reported to have terminal degrees. The student-to-faculty ratio is reported as 13:1.

RU-N total enrollment as of fall 2014 exceeded 11,300 (undergraduate, graduate, professional and doctoral) students. Undergraduates numbered approximately 7,300 (5,900 full-time and 1,400 part-time) students and graduate students totaled 3,900 (1,700 full-time and 2,200) (Rutgers, 2014-2015). First-Year and Transfer Undergraduate Students number 2,000. As of fall 2014, Male students account for approximately 900 of total number of First-Year and Transfer undergraduates (Rutgers, 2014-2015). Roughly, 14% of all undergraduate students at RU-N are Black males (Rutgers, 2014-2015). According to Rutgers: University Fact Book (2014-2015), the total number of undergraduate degrees conferred upon students at RU-N for the 2011-2012 academic year totaled about 1,600. Black males accounted for 6.6% of those conferred.

TABLE 1.1- MALE RU-N DEGREE CONFERRED

Source: Rutgers University Fact Book (2014-2015)

*Total Number RU-N Undergraduate Male Degree Conferral: 709

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to understand the ways in which male identities influence academic engagement amongst Black male collegians at an urban university.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In an effort to better understand the impact of male identity archetypes on Black male collegians at an urban university, the following primary questions are used to help guide this research.

1. In what ways, does male identity formation amongst Black male collegians influence academic engagement?
- 2) How is Black male identity constructed and operationalized among matriculated undergraduate students at an urban university?

ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM

The research on undergraduate academic engagement amongst males is varied and complex. Academic success for Black males at the college level is predicated on a number of factors beyond intelligence i.e. financial aid, employment, educational history of parents or siblings and family relationships(Attewell et al., 2010; DeBerard et al., 2004; Rootman, 1972; Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1975, 1994). However, the current research

on academic engagement on Black male collegians suggests their experiences need to be examined more closely (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2006c; Strayhorn, 2010).

In 2002, Black males accounted for just 4.3% of all students at public or private colleges (Harper, 2006c). According to Dancy (2007), college retention in 2000 for Black males was only about 34%. The retention rates for Black males are the lowest of any other racialized or gendered group (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2012; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984). Between the years 2000-20008, Black males comprised 14% of undergraduate enrollment, but accounted for only 10% of degrees awarded in 2008 (Lee & Ransom, 2011). Less than 45% of Black male collegians graduate from undergraduate programs as compared to just over 60% for White males (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). Black males face a number of challenges while in undergraduate programs such as high attrition, low retention, and disproportionate rates of discipline (Lee & Ransom, 2011). However, the empirical literature to-date focuses primarily on the outcomes regarding academic performance, but few studies investigate non-cognitive or structural factors regarding outcomes (Dancy, 2007; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984). Several scholars have noted that male identity plays a pivotal role in the academic engagement of Black male collegians (Deering, 2004; Dixon, 1999; Harper, 2012; Majors & Billson, 1993). However, there have been few studies that have used male identity formation as the primary variable in investigating academic engagement amongst Black male collegians (Dancy, 2007).

The research on Black male identity construction has too often focused on the negative attitudes that Black men have towards Black women or the behavior exhibited by Black boys due to the absence of Black fathers (Wright et al, 1999). Exploring how Black male identities are constructed prior to and once matriculated influences academic engagement (Connell, 1989; Reddock, 2004; Parry, 1996a, 1996b, 1997). Much of the existing research on male identity construction is a result of the negative stigmas associated with Black males in classrooms i.e. suspension, drop out and low test scores (Wright et al, 1999). Riddell contends it is important to understand how the classroom in the context of the larger school system perpetuates and indoctrinates students to ascribe to various male identities (1989).

Educational settings have a powerful influence on the construction of male identity (Connell, 1989). They often become the place where social inequities and struggles for power get played out (Riddell, 2003). Teachers and students are not in a vacuum. Teachers and students often enact scripts that have been ascribed by the larger society. Black males in the classroom are subject to the same gender codes prescribed in general society (Billings & Tate, 1995; Ferguson, 2001, Sewell, 1997). In other words, the behaviors often associated with Black manhood in neighborhoods re-emerge in classrooms. Unfortunately, Black manhood has been labeled as troublesome (Parry, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Wright et al, 1999). As such, the result often leads to the negative categorization of Black males by education faculty and staff (Sewell, 1997).

Consequently, Black males often are forced to strive for the archetype of (White) masculinity, which in most instances they can never reach (Riddell, 2003).

A significant body of literature exists that explores Black male collegians' academic engagement in regards to graduation, persistence, attrition, financial aid, mentorship, academic preparedness, campus involvement, social supports, academic supports (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Harper, 2004, 2006c, 2009, 2010; Hood, 1992; Lewis et al., 2010). Harper in his study of the nation's 50 flagship colleges found that Black males accounted for less than three percent of enrollment (2006c). As a result, Harper made a number of recommendations to institutions to help increase not only enrollment but also graduation rates. Harper (2006c) advocated for more mentorship opportunities to be made available among faculty and matriculated Black male students. He also found that students that were more integrated into the leadership and extracurricular activities of the school exhibited better academic engagement (Harper, 2006c).

The scholarship on male identity and the variables associated with academic achievement in secondary schools (i.e. Archer & Yamashita, 2003; Connell, 1996, Connolly, 1995; Dalley-Trim, 2007; Hunter & Davis, 1992; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Pascoe, 2003; Vinto, 1994) is extensive, but not exhaustive. Further, the research that explores the variables of race, gender and academic achievement is also extensive (i.e. Akom, 2003; Davis, 2003; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Majors & Billson, 1993; Noguera, 2003; Parham & McDavis, 1987; Staples, 1982). However, empirical research relative to male identity construction

among Black male collegians is scant. A number of studies have investigated academic achievement among middle and secondary Black male students in international settings (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Parry, 1996a, 1996b; Sewell, 1997; Wright et al. 1998).

Domestically, empirical studies that research Black males and academic achievement exist, but focus in large part on students at the elementary, middle and secondary levels (Addison & Westmoreland, 1999; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Davis & Martin, 2008; Foster, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Strayhorn 2009). Research on the impact of male identity construction amongst Black male collegians exists, but is limited (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Deering, 2004).

The following variables have been identified as possible factors affecting matriculation and retention rates i.e. socio-economic status (SES), family background, social, cultural and academic integration on campus, campus environment (urban versus suburban), age and employment status (Harper, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Harris & Harper, 2008; Strayhorn, 2010; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 2005). The former studies have identified the stated variables as impacting achievement and persistence of Black males in the areas of matriculation, persistence and grade point averages; but few studies have investigated Black male identity construction in relation to academic engagement in higher education (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Deering, 2004).

This study directly addresses the gap in the literature by focusing on the five typologies that emerged in Sewell's (1997) seminal study. The purpose of this dissertation research

is to understand the impact the chosen male identities *conformist, innovator, retreatist, rebel and hedonist* has on academic engagement amongst Black male collegians at Rutgers-Newark. The current study sought to expand on the existing studies (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Harper, 2012; Harris & Harper, 2008; Polite & Davis, 1997; Sewell, 1997; Strayhorn, 2010) by using male identity as a variable influencing academic engagement amongst five Black male students at an urban university. The study uses the phenomenological case study approach (Merriam, 1998) with semi-structured in-depth interviews (Patton, 2001) to gather information regarding the five male typologies identified by Sewell (1997).

Utilizing convenient sampling (Merriam, 1998) and a comparative dissertation research methodology (Yin, 2009), this study focuses on Black male student engagement at RU-N. National data overwhelmingly posit Black male collegians as having the worst academic engagement and persistence rates (Attewell et al., 2010; Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2012; Lee & Ransom, 2011). Further, the racial and gender gap is most pronounced with the identified group. The reasons why Black males face many challenges in higher education is varied and extensive based on existing literature. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation research will be to understand the impact of male identities on academic engagement amongst Black male collegians at Rutgers-Newark.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study has four intended audiences. The first intended audience of this study is the Black male collegian. For Black male collegians, this study speaks directly to them on their current status and future in higher education, in general and at Rutgers-Newark, in particular. The presence of Black males on university campuses around the country has been steadily shrinking (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2006a; 2006c; Hood, 1992; Lee & Ransom, 2011; Strayhorn, 2008b). The matriculation and persistence rates of Black males at Rutgers-Newark are alarmingly low. Arguably, the most important factor to help turn the tide of low Black male enrollment and persistence towards graduation at Rutgers-Newark is going to be Black male collegians themselves. Some Black male collegians, upon reading this dissertation, may discover they are actively ascribing to behavior(s) which may, unintentionally, be leading them to poor educational outcomes. Further, this dissertation may also illuminate social cultural norms that Black males collegians hold as important which conflict with their ability to academically integrate into the University environment. The literature on the topic, overwhelmingly, suggests that the family plays a vital role in Black male achievement in college (Dixon, 1999; Strayhorn, 2008c).

Thus, the second intended audience is the family of Black male collegians. The family is often thought to be the first institution that socializes a child. As a result, the family of Black male collegians can better understand the role they play in helping to prepare their student for college achievement and persistence. The study will provide critical

information for families to better distinguish between male identities that are worth nurturing or curbing in their student. Further, families will learn how best to support their student while matriculated in the undergraduate program of study.

Third, scholars can use the current study to assess the impact of the five typologies on Black male collegians that may have similar circumstances as those who participated in the study. Though the study takes place at Rutgers-Newark, scholars can use the present study's findings to identify the possible implications for other groups. Due to the fact that the current study is a dissertation research on Black male identity construction at an urban public university, scholars may want to explore the implications in different environmental settings or college campuses i.e. rural, suburban, public, private or ivy league. This study will be helpful for scholars who are interested in developing effective educational practices when addressing educational outcomes of Black males.

The final audience this study holds significance for are Rutgers- Newark administrators. Tinto, (1982), Harper (2006a, 2006b, 2006c) and Strayhorn (2010) have all indicated in their studies that student-faculty relationships make a difference in collegiate persistence. University administrators, as a result of this study, may want to revisit faculty responsibilities. Thus, new programs may need to be created to help foster more social and academic integration on campus. In addition, the admissions office administration can review this study in evaluating admission requirements.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Being a Black Man in America is like having another job.

-Arthur Ashe

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES: BLACK MALES IN AMERICA

There are a number of areas in American society for which Black males consistently have poor outcomes i.e. education, employment, criminal justice system, income and single-parent households (Lee & Ransom, 2011; Strayhorn, 2008c). While there have been a number of advances that have benefited the Black community, in general, Black males continue to face a number of obstacles that result in poor outcomes. Daniel Patrick Moynihan in his controversial report explained the hardships that Blacks in America experience (1965). Moynihan asserts:

The Negro situation is commonly perceived by Whites in terms of the visible manifestation of discrimination and poverty ... It is more difficult, however, for Whites to perceive the effect that three centuries of exploitation have had on the fabric of Negro society itself. Here the consequences of the historic injustices done to Negro Americans are silent and hidden from view. But here is where the true injury has occurred: unless this damage is repaired, all the effort to end discrimination and poverty and injustice will come [too] little (1965, p. 4)

Moynihan highlighted the existence of racism and the denial of its existence that exacerbates the diminished position of African Americans in society (1965). Moynihan

identified the ‘tangle of pathologies’ that limited the ability for Black families and Black men- in particular, to progress (1965). Moynihan identified the following factors, challenging Black mobility: labor market, residential segregation, concentrated poverty, criminal justice system and education (1965).

Moynihan went on to imply that Black women as heads-of-household exacerbated the deterioration of the Black family (1965). The key to turning the outlook for the Black family, according to Moynihan (1965), was education. He believed that if Black males were educated either classically or through skills training, then Black males would be able obtain viable employment and thus be able to regain their position as heads-of-household financially and culturally (1965).

The outcomes of Black men in society have not changed much since Moynihan’s (1965) report. According to Acs, Braswell, Sorensen and Turner the unemployment rate for Black males still is double that of White males (2013). Black males, in 2011, had an unemployment rate of about 17%, whereas the White male unemployment rate was about eight percent (Acs et al., 2013).

According to Lewis et al., in 2008, Black children 18 and under were three times more likely to live in a single parent household as compared to White children. Nearly two-thirds of all Black children are reported to live in single-parent homes (2010). An alarming one-third of Black children were reported to be living in poverty as compared to only one-tenth of White children (Lewis et al., 2010). Acs et al. report, “Today, despite

the significant decline in residential segregation, virtually all high-poverty neighborhoods (neighborhoods where more than 40% of the population is poor) are majority-minority, and blacks are over five times more likely than Whites to live in high-poverty neighborhoods” (2013, p. 15). The disparities involving Black male outcomes exist when it comes to the criminal justice system. In 2010, 1 in 6 Black males were incarcerated versus 1 in 33 white males (Acs et al., 2013). Shockingly, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the incarceration rates and college enrollment rates were virtually equal among Black males (Acs et al., 2013).

According to data from 2008, one-third of Black children had at least one parent with a high school diploma, 24 % had a parent with some college experience and only 15% lived with a parent with at least a bachelor's degree (Lewis et al., 2010). High school completion amongst Blacks has steadily increased since 1975 (Acs et al., 2013). However, Strayhorn reports that only around 43% of Black students enroll in college directly out of high school, as compared to 75% of White students (2009).

Further, Black males at the secondary level are suspended and drop out at higher rates than any other group (Acs et al., 2013; Ferguson, 2001; Strayhorn, 2009). Strayhorn reported that 53% of low-income high school graduates enroll directly into college as compared to 87% of high income graduates (2008b). Lewis et al. found that in 2008 only 8% of all Blacks took an advanced placement test (2010). By 2009, Black males on average scored at least 100 points lower on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (Lewis et al.,

2010). Strayhorn found that the Black male graduation rate from high school hovered around 50 % (2008b).

According to Dancy, in 1955, Black males accounted for 55 % of African American enrollment in college; however, by the early 2000s, Black males only accounted for 37 % of enrollment (2007). Most startling of all, Harper reports, “[the] college dropout dilemma is exacerbated by gender, as more than two-thirds (67.6 %) of Black men who start college do not graduate within six years, which is the lowest college completion rate among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups in higher education” (2009, p.700). On too many college and university campuses Black males are deemed the most disengaged (Harper, 2009).

RESEARCH ON BLACK MALE IN EDUCATION

The review of the literature is divided into various parts. The first body of literature explores the empirical research on the perception of black males of the educational system, specifically teachers and administrators (Blyth & Milner, 1996; Davis, 1994; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Parry, 1996a, 1996b; Sewell, 1997). The aforementioned studies focus primarily on the middle and high school levels. The second section focuses on the exclusion of Black males from the educational systems’ hidden curriculum (Blyth & Milner, 1996; Connolly, 1995; Harper, 2006c; Wright et al., 1998). The following studies (Davis, 1994; Deering 2004; Harper, 2006c, 2008; Heinel, 2008; Hood, 1992;

Strayhorn 2009) conducted at the college level vary in scope, but focus on Black male persistence at predominately White institutions. The third section explores the construction of Black male identities, in general, and in educational settings, in particular (Connell, 1989; Connolly, 1995; Reddock, 2004; hooks, 2003; Hunter & Davis, 1992; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Majors & Billson, 1993; Ogbu, 2004; Parry, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Sewell, 1997; Staples, 1982). Finally, Black male identity construction is analyzed from five key areas of identity development of Black male collegians: individual (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 2003; Harper, 2004, 2009; hooks, 2003; Majors and Billson, 1993; Sewell, 1997; Staples, 1982; Wright et al., 1998), family (Brown and Davis, 2000; Bush, 2004; Mandura, 2006; Ogbu, 1985), faculty (Davis, n.d.; Harper, 2009; Strayhorn, 2006a, 2006b), peers (Connolly, 1995; Duncan, 2002; Harper, 2006b; Hunter and Davis, 1992; Leary, 1992, 2005; Sewell, 1997; Pascoe, 2003) and finally mentor(s) (Dancy, 2007; Odih, 2002; Polite and Davis, 1999).

Much of the empirical research that has been conducted is a result of the negative outcomes associated with Black males in classrooms (Harper, 2012; Wright et al, 1999). Many of the studies are limited to Black male performance in regard to test scores, grade point averages, gifted and talented programs, suspensions and drop-outs (Ferguson, 2001; Harper, 2004; Lee and Ransom, 2011; Lewis et al., 2010; Schott Foundation, 2010; Strayhorn, 2009). The few empirical studies on Black males have identified a number of "deficiencies" Black males begin their college career with such as: low test scores, high

drop-out rates, disciplinary issues and diminished family support (Lee & Ransom, 2011; Lewis et al., 2010; Schott Foundation, 2010).

Many of the factors that have been attributed to Black male underachievement have been identified as related to cultural and environmental factors (Noguera, 2003). Further, there is evidence that socioeconomic status also plays a part in academic engagement of Black males (Noguera, 2003; Ogbu, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008b, 2008c, 2009). The Schott Foundation in their report stated that by 2020, the U.S. had to graduate more than 47 % of Black males from the nation's high schools in order to be globally competitive (2010). However, there are a number of factors present in too many of our nations' educational systems that challenges this goal.

The secondary education research on Black male student suspensions, academic disengagement, drop-out and testing performance is extensive (Dancy, 2007; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Ferguson, 2001; Harper, 2006c; Lewis et al., 2010; Lee & Ransom, 2011; Sewell, 1997; Schott Foundation, 2010, 2012; Strayhorn, 2008c; 2009). The Schott Foundation's report on Black male student achievement in all 50 states found that Black male students are twice as likely to be suspended and three times as likely to be expelled as compared to White males (2010). The achievement gap has gotten wider when it comes to Black males (Davis, 2003). According to the National Center for Education Statistics in 2008, at least 12% of Black males between the ages of 18-24 had dropped out of high school (Lee & Ransom, 2011).

Black Boys in School

Scholarship on male identity formation in educational settings is not new (Dancy, 2007). The research into academic performance by Black male students in grades K-12 is extensive (Addison & Westmoreland, 1999; Blyth & Milner, 1993; Connell, 1989, 1996; Connolly, 1995; Davis, 2001, 2003; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Ferguson, 2001; Lewis et al., 2010; Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994; Odih, 2002, Strayhorn, 2009). Several scholars have investigated the academic engagement of Black boys within the United States (Duncan 2002; Noguera, 2003; Schott Foundation, 2010, 2012), while others have investigated academic engagement of Afro-Caribbean male students (Connell, 1989; Connolly, 1995; Parry, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Sewell, 1997). International Afro-Caribbean male students, overwhelmingly, have the same academic outcomes as American born Black male students (Connell, 1989, Riddell, 1989; Wright et al., 1998).

Several studies have investigated familial influences (i.e. roles of fathers and mothers) related to the academic performance of Black males students (Brown & Davis, 2000; Grief et al., 1998; Mandura, 2006). Other scholars have investigated the role of academic preparedness on academic engagement of Black male students (Ford et al., 2002; Michael-Chadwell et al., 2009; Thompson & Lewis, 2005; Whiting, 2006). Several studies have explored the influences on cultural identity among Black male students (Bass & Coleman, 1997; Duncan & McCoy, 2007; Wakefield & Hudley, 2005). More recently, studies have explored how male identity formation affects academic

engagement among male students (Pascoe, 2007; Sewell, 1997; Weaver-Hightower, 2003).

The research on Black male students in grades K-12 is not limited to factors contributing to academic engagement; but also includes research on the experiences of Black boys while in school and their academic engagement. Studies have investigated the discipline that Black males face while in schools (Ferguson, 2001; Noguera, 2003). Other studies review the effect of teacher perceptions teachers on Black boys (Foster, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Pimentel, 2004; Polite & Davis, 1999; Rist, 2000; Sewell, 1997), while other scholars have reported on issues of retention and drop-out rates (Addison & Westmoreland, 1999; Lewis et al., 2010; Schott Foundation, 2010, 2012).

What has been salient in research regarding Black males and academic achievement is that male identity is a factor (Dancy, 2007; Davis 2001, 2003). The literature on academic engagement among Black males in schools is influenced by the research on behaviors and experiences of young Black boys. Scholars suggest that Black males sometimes construct their male identities in opposition to perceived White male identity (hooks, 2004; Majors & Billson, 1993; Staples, 1982). Scholars suggest Black males often are viewed in educational settings as ‘scholar’ (Whiting, 2006) and ‘nigger’ (Harper, 2009). In educational spaces Black males are often labeled as troubled, endangered, and uneducable (Noguera, 2003). Some of these categorizations have long-term implications (Dancy, 2007; Ferguson, 2001; Polite & Davis, 1999; Sewell, 1997). For example, Ann Arnett Ferguson’ *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity* (2001)

provides narratives from students about their experiences in schools. Part of Ferguson's analysis of the 'troublemakers' states:

The Troublemakers were also more likely to talk of race as a tangible factor in their present existence. Jamar described racial identification as a feature of his everyday life...Identification as black, even for Troublemakers, was not a total and seamless attachment. The discourse of individualism and choice race ran through all their explanations, especially when it came to describing their own life-chances (2001, p. 211).

In *Black Masculinities and Schooling: How Black boys survive modern schooling* (1997), Sewell interviews a teacher about how Black males are viewed in school by faculty and administrators. Sewell asks the teacher:

TS (Sewell): Are there any groups of boys that you find particularly Threatening?

Ms. Brookes (teacher): The Black boys are a lot bigger than the White boys. I have to keep an extra eye out for them because they will either beat up first years or try and nick (steal) something.

The notion of being watched was an experience that African-Caribbean Boys felt operated continually in other states.

Victor: It's like White people have got eyes in the back of their heads. Everytime I go into a shop up Oxford Street, you can see the sales person get nervous. Sometimes they do not hide it and just stare you out like you is some criminal or tea-leaf (thief) (1997, p. 176).

The aforementioned narratives illustrate the extent to which labels and negative perceptions applied to Black males in schools affected them outside of educational spaces. Majors and Billson (1993) contend that as a result Black males don a male

identity that exudes ‘coolness.’ As such, being cool is seen as the primary male identity for Black males to subscribe. Validation from peers is essential in this feat (Dancy, 2007). ‘Coolness’ in educational settings means breaking the rules, receiving poor grades, fighting, playing a sport, and making jokes at others’ expense (Majors & Billson, 1993; Staples, 1982). Conversely, ‘acting White’ is seen as the counter position to being ‘cool’ (Ogbu, 2003, 2004).

Ogbu’s (2003) study in Shaker Heights, *Black American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Academic Disengagement*, investigates the disengagement of Black students in a Ohio suburb. The following narrative was a conversation with a Black male student recalled by one of the school counselor’s regarding his academic performance:

School Counselor: He said, “You do not have to ride home on the bus like I do.” I said, “You’re right. I do not.” “You do not have to play in the neighborhood with all the other kids.” I said, “You’re right. I do not understand.” He said, “I do not want ‘em (them) I’m smart. They’ll make fun of me. I won’t have any friends.” I said, “So you’d rather sit there and pretend that you do not know then face kids who might say you’re smart.” And he even said, “Worse than that.” I said, “Well, what’s worse than that in your world.” He said, “Where I live, they’re gonna say I’m White.” I said, “Oh!” I said, “Now I think I understand. I do not agree with you, but I, now I hear what you’re saying: I do not want ‘em (them) to call me names.” “I want ‘em (them) to think I’m just like everybody else, and if that means sitting in the class and not raising my hand, and not doing better in school, I have to live here. And that’s my world. So do not think that you can say, “Oh, you should be proud of being smart,” he says. “I am, but I can’t let anybody know that, and that’s coming from one of the, one of the fourteen year old youngsters” (Ogbu, 2003, p.202).

Ogbu argued that peer approval prevented smart students from performing according to their ability (2003). Majors and Billson (1993) posit that Black boys, prior to college;

learn early to posture themselves as emotionless, fearless, and aloof. The ‘cool pose’ becomes pathological, because of its continued use as a coping mechanism (Majors & Billson, 1993). Hunter and Davis argue that the ‘tough guy’ and ‘player of women’ presentation is dysfunctional (1992). In order for one to be a ‘real’ man, a Black man, one has to be tough and a lady’s man (Dancy, 2007). According to Dancy, “Often times, a singular mode of masculinity is taught to African American boys in their social experiences” (2007, p. 110). Davis and Polite contend that contemporary masculine behaviors conflict with academic success, but leads to social rewards like popularity (1999). Dancy (2007) argues that academic success is equated with femininity for Black males.

Some Black boys may view their male identity, in part, based on family expectations and validation. In fact, hooks (2004) argue that families, detrimentally, affect the self-esteem of Black boys and shame their authentic selves. Black boys are often praised and for being male, but also shamed for not conforming to acceptable “patriarchal boyhood” (hooks, 2004). Because of these early socialization experiences, many Black men quickly understand the social rewards associated with exhibiting masculine behaviors as derogatory name calling and peer disapproval of feminine associated behaviors (Dancy, 2007). These experiences inform Black males collegians’ perceptions of male identity. There are a number of scripted gender roles that negatively correlate with Black manhood by the time they reach college (Dancy, 2007; Davis & Polite, 1999; Harper, 2007).

Black Male Collegians and Male Identity

The literature is scant on male identity formation among Black male collegians (Dancy, 2007). The experiences of Black male collegians in many institutions are over looked (Harper, 2012). In higher education the reward for academic achievement among Black males may be undermined by the ways in which they formulate their male identities. Dancy argues Black men consciously or subconsciously interpret learning environments as sites in conflict with their social identity, sense of security, and self-worth (2007). hooks (2004) suggest that Black male collegians may undervalue their education in the presence of their peers who are anti-intellectual.

Harper's (2012) national study explores factors that promote academic success among Black male collegians. Harper's research consisted of 219 Black male collegians at 42 colleges and universities across 20 states around the country (2012). Several scholars argued that support of faculty is vital to the academic success of Black male collegians (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2012, 2009; Polite & Davis, 1999; Strayhorn, 2006a). Harper also found that social and academic integration on campus was necessary (2012). Strayhorn in his study of 531 men (231 Blacks and 300 Whites) at White institutions found that a sense of 'belonging' was important to retaining male collegians (2008c).

Notably, Harper concluded that "though their (Black male participants) was seemingly more productive than other expressions of masculinity, some may rightly observe that the participants in this study subscribed and aspired to traditional, hegemonic gender scripts"

(2012, p. 17). Polite and Davis (1999) contend that hegemonic masculinity permeates on college campuses.

Dancy argues, “Few studies examine the nexus between gender roles and collegiate engagement for African American men in college” (2007, p. 115). There are a few empiricists who have investigated the relationship between gender and race among Black male collegians (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2009; Polite & Davis 1999). Polite and Davis contend “There is virtually no race- or gender-neutral schooling context for Black males in higher education” (1999, p. 134). Polite and Davis reports one of the study participants, Jamal:

Black men on campus are constantly in transition. There is a constant need for us to transform to the community. How one speaks, how you talk is very important- it’s an indicator whether you are a part of the community...there is a high expectation to talk like a ‘Black man,’ with that attitude and manliness. Being a good proper guy is not always important, it doesn’t get you very much. On campus, it’s important to appear very sexual, you get man points...And if you play basketball, you are cool as hell (1999, p.136)

Dancy’s (2007) dissertation study explored notions of male identity construction among twenty-four engaged Black male collegians at both historically White institutions (HWI) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). Dancy found that collegians who attended HBCUs had better academic engagement and more socially integrated on their campuses (2007). Davis (n.d.) contends, “...Very little within-race analysis of gender has been done to disentangle the differential experience of African American

students in predominately White college settings” (p.4). The research is void on academic engagement of Black male collegians in an urban context. Studies separate college campuses as either HWI or HBCU, but do not discuss the nuances associated with urban campuses. Tinto (1982) encourages a multi-institutional approach to studies in higher education. Inquires of institutions and individuals to be sampled should be done in ways to highlight particular types of comparisons (Tinto, 1982).

The responsibility of addressing academic engagement among Black male collegians is not exclusively assigned to the institutions. Polite and Davis (1999) contend that “colleges and universities should examine their diversity efforts and consider their students as multifaceted people whose school experiences are not affected only b[y] either their race or their gender” (p. 148). Subsequently, Hunter and Davis (1992) posit that the negative experiences of Black male collegians are usually considered to be consequences of the institution. However, these experiences, in many, cases may be related to peer pressure and expectations of maladaptive definitions of manhood (Hunter & Davis, 1992; Polite & Davis, 1999).

MALE IDENTITY

Formation

The discussion on Black men's notions of male identities is not an easy one. The route to self-identity consists of several variables that feed into one another and is reflective of several factors including culture, religion, language, sexuality, and peer-grouping. The discourse on Black male identities has been discussed in pathological ways (Wright et al, 1998). "Not all boys are given equal access to this provision and the masculine identity this affords. Definitions of male identities within education tend to be based upon binary oppositions of success/failure; which are both class and race specific" (Wright et al, 1998, p. 77). Odih contends that oppressive masculinities, many of which performed by Black males, hinder ways of thinking, knowing, and feeling often leading to notions of femininity (2002).

Reddock contends hegemonic [white] male identities maintain their existence through integrated relationships by dominant men (2004). Black men, historically, have been unable to wield dominance (Reddock, 2004). Therefore, Black males are forced to exert themselves in ways counter to traditional notions of male identities. Connolly (1995) suggests that Black male students adopt aggressive behaviors as a reaction to White hegemony that is exhibited by students in schools. Connolly suggests their visibility as a group helps to legitimize, for White students and teachers, their positioning as a 'threat' (1995). Black male identities are deemed illegitimate in schools (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994; Sewell, 1997; Wright et al, 1998). As such Black males must adopt masculine

personas associated as acceptable in their peer groups (Connell, 1989; Connolly, 1995; Odih, 2002).

Parry (1996a) suggests that Black males have constructed male identities based on the notion of the 'other.' The construction of male identities has occurred as a response to White male identities (Parry, 1996a; Wright et al, 1998). In particular, Black male identities have developed as a direct response to White masculine power (Connolly, 1995; Parry, 1996a; Wright et al, 1998). Hillary Beckles states, "Hegemonic White male identities in the West Indies is associated with the possession of power profits, glory and pleasure, all of which articulated as core elements of White masculine ideology" (as cited in Parry, 1996a, para. 2). Black male construction of male identities is predicated on being unable to fulfill White notions of male identities (Connolly, 1995). Thus, Black males have incorporated notions of male identity that include sexual prowess in particular, the number of females one has sexual intercourse with. Secondly, Black men have also constructed notions of manhood that revolve around the number of children that one has fathered (Parry, 1996a). It is important to mention that Black notions of male identities are hetero-normative in nature (Parry, 1996a, 1997, 2004).

Black males have constructed notions of male identities that are 'mythical' in nature (Wright et al, 1998). Black male identities conform to dominant definitions of manhood and reinforce dominant symbols of control (Wright et al, 1998). Hence, Black males have in response to being disallowed access to White male hegemony constructed notions of male identities that are oppressive to black women, children, and other Black men

(Connolly, 1995; Odi, 2002; Sewell, 1997; Wright et al, 1998). The ability to dominate becomes closely connected with one's ability to be Black and male.

Many Black males often times are left having to live up to or strive for the archetype of (White) male identities, which in most instances they can never reach (Riddell, 2003).

The male identities performed by many Black boys run counter to the acceptable forms of manhood (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Riddell, 1989). Connolly states, "In short, they [Black boys] represent all that it means to be male. However, it is precisely because of this that, on the other hand, some of the White boys feel increasingly threatened" (1995, p. 83).

Connell (1989) suggests Black males must choose a masculine persona in order to determine their place in education. Schools help produce various forms of masculinities as well as support already existing ones (Connell, 1989; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Riddell, 1989; Sewell, 1997). According to Connell (1989), schools as an institution, in many ways act as a marketplace. Schools help to produce various gender-styles that are cultivated or dismissed based on their relation to power (Connell, 1989, 1996). Kimmel contends male identity on its face is implied to refer to White male identities (1996). White male identity wields power and control. Bederman (1996) asserts that men with power and control are exclusively white. Conversely, Black males who exhibit power or control must do so by first acquiring support from the White power structure (Billings & Tate, 1995).

Educational Context

Schools help to construct and maintain male identities hierarchically (Connell, 1989; Sewell, 1997). Connell (1989) argues that based on the acceptable forms of masculinities schools sort males students into various tracks. These various tracks dictate for many male students their access to social power and capital (Yosso, 2005). “Social power in terms of access to higher education, entry to professionals, command of communication, is being delivered by the school system to boys” (Connell, 1989, p. 295). Thus, Black males may not have the same educational opportunities in school because of the male identity they adopt.

Black male identities are not always accepted by schools because it is considered an aberration to White male identities (Harper, 2009; Strayhorn, 2010). White male identities are seen as the ‘right’ and ‘normal’ form of manhood. Wright et al. (1998) writes,

...it is clear that ‘race’ acts to position Black masculinities as illegitimate, rather than merely subordinate. It is on this basis that young Black men find themselves excluded from the schooling process and distanced from the definitions of various forms of (White) male identities found there (p. 84).

Black male identities only become more acceptable when it is performed in sports (Connell, 1989; Connolly, 1995; Sewell, 1997; Wright et al, 1998).

Schools have a powerful influence on the construction of male identities (Connell, 1989). Schools often become the place where social inequities and struggles for power are

played out (Riddell, 2003). The education system is probably the best setting to engage in the debate around gender and male identities (Connell, 1989). The classroom is the second most powerful site after the family for ‘masculinizing’ boys (Connell, 1989; Odih, 2002). The aforementioned begs the question: How are Black and White males being socialized in schools? Wright et al. (1998) contend that Black masculinities in schools often lead to a disproportionate number of Blacks males being excluded from the school environment for the perception of aggressive and sexual behaviors.

Teachers and students are not in a vacuum. Teachers and students often enact gender and racial scripts that have been prescribed by general society (Strayhorn, 2010). Connell states,

The sociology of culture makes us aware of the importance of mass communications in the contemporary gender order... mass media are crammed with representations of masculinities- from rock music, beer commercials, sitcoms, action movies, and war films to news programs-that circulate on a vast scale (1996, p.211).

Therefore, ‘hyper- masculine’ behaviors associated with Black male identities in neighborhoods are exhibited to classrooms (Connell, 1996; Dalley-Trim, 2007). As a result, Black male students are often labeled as troublesome (Harris and Harper, 2008; Parry, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Wright et al, 1999).

Sewell (1997) argues the primary focus of Black male students is their ‘body’ and not their mind. As such, Black boys have to negotiate a rather hostile environment- the

classroom. Thus, Black boys are in constant conflict with teachers and students from other gendered and racial groups (Connell, 1996). “[Black male students] participate in these masculinities simply by entering the school and living in its structures. The terms on which they participate, however, are negotiable-whether adjusting to the patterns, rebelling against them, or trying to modify them (Connell, 1996, p. 214).

Black males in the classroom are often thought of as being disruptive and in need of strict guidance to control their behavior (Ferguson, 2001). “[Black] boys are perceived as quintessentially masculine. They are seen as hard, aggressive, often in confrontation with teachers...” (Connolly, 1995, p. 83). Black students are seen as threats to the larger school structure (Connolly, 1995; Wright et al, 1998). Blyth and Milner (1996) discuss how Black males are then excluded from the schools’ “hidden curriculum” as a means of coping with the perceived threat of Black male identities. Schools, as an institution, and teachers, as agents within the school, confront notions of Black male identities by excluding Black males from the social and cultural capital present in schools (Connell, 1989; Connolly, 1995; Sewell, 1997; Wright et al, 1998; Yosso, 2005).

Black students receive different responses from teachers as compared to their White counter parts (Odihi, 2002). Ferguson found that White teachers often felt ‘more threatened’ by Black students, thereby leading to disciplinary action (2001). The following is an excerpt from Mac an Ghaill of a teacher’s perception of Black male students:

[Blacks] are tough. I tried not to let anyone influence me in how I

treated them they look at you with wild eyes if you tell them to sit down. They are looking, expecting trouble. They are more prejudiced than White people. The Asians are better. You tell them to do something and they are meek and they go do it (1994, p. 148).

Many Black male students are prevented from academic success not because of their aptitude, but rather the perception by those in control of schools (Sewell, 1997). The approval of one's male behavior is not limited to faculty and staff, but also must be supported by peers. Harper purports the male identity performed in schools by a Black male student, whether as the 'smart kid' or 'jock,' must be approved by peers (2004).

Black males themselves create their own notions of male identities (Wright et al, 1998). Black males in many cases understand societal constructions of Black male identities, but often reject them in place of self and peer perspectives (Connolly, 1995; Parry 1996a, 1997, Perry et al., 2004, Riddell, 1989; Wright et al, 1998). Wright et al. (1998) note, "For some of these young men, their exclusion from dominant definitions of male identities and hence high status academic knowledge and power, did lead to active reinventions of Black male identities..." (p. 85). Reddock (2004) contends that for Jamaican boys, in particular, underachievement is a part of being male. Reddock argues that male privilege affords men the ability to negotiate and maintain prestigious positions in society (2004). Too many Black male youths are exposed to negative images of manhood and underachievement (Staples, 1978).

However, gender socialization of boys leaves them deficient with respect to skills in the context of the educational system. Black boys, too often, take on the image of “hard” and “macho” in the classroom, which leaves them in constant confrontation with the academic ethos (Connolly, 1995; Perry, Steele & Hilliard, 2004). Perry et al. found that Black boys did not equate male identities with diligent study or good grades (2004).

SEWELL’S TYPOLOGIES

Sewell in his seminal study identified five Black male typologies: conformist, innovator, retreatist, rebel and hedonist (1997). Sewell’s (1997) findings are important for this research study provides a point of departure for the identification and development of Black male identities.

Conformist

Black males who adopt a ‘conformist’ male identity tend to speak in what is deemed ‘standard’ English (Sewell, 1997). According to Sewell, conformists exhibit an “ability to move into an alternative system of thought from that of his everyday knowledge,” (1997, p. 81). Black males who exhibit a conformist male identity most often befriend individuals from various ethnic backgrounds (Sewell, 1997). Fordham asserts that Black youth who ascribe to the ‘conformist’ identity tend to reject ‘fictive-kinship’ (1988). Sewell renames ‘fictive-kinship’ as ‘the Black collective’ (1997). The rejection of ‘the

Black collective' is not limited to individuals, but also cultural ideals and traditions. In a study conducted by Fordham, Black youth who were 'conformist' indicated that they could not share the same appreciation as those whose identities were anti-school (1988).

Sewell (1997) identifies two subcategories of conformists. The first is identified as 'acting White' and the latter as 'acting elite'. 'Acting White' is identified as the [perceived] rejection of the Black collective, while 'acting elite' "allows Black people to retain the elements of their culture that will help them progress within White institutions and reject the things and people who refuse to conform" (Sewell, 1997, p. 84).

Conformists overwhelmingly adhere to the "status quo" i.e. speaks 'good English,' well behaved on campus, have above a 3.0 G.P.A. and affiliated with respected organizations on-campus. Conformists adhere to the established standard not only in speech and music, but also in style of dress and grooming. Conformists are rewarded for their ability to conform to the status quo of the institution by teachers and administrators (Sewell, 1997).

Fordham states:

...an individualistic rather than a collective ethos is sanctioned in the school context. Black children enter school having to unlearn or, at least, to modify their own culturally sanctioned interactional and behavioral styles and adopt those styles rewarded in the school context if they wish to achieve academic success (1988, p. 55).

Black males who manifest a male identity congruent with 'conformist' identity must in essence reconcile any cultural, gender or racialized identities that challenge the status quo

of the educational environment. Black males, in particular, must be conscious of their behaviors as they will be policed by those in their environment more aggressively than other gender or racial groups (Sewell, 1997). In educational settings, regardless of the color of the faculty or administrator, Black males who are not willing to become 'conformist' undergo enormous scrutiny, ostracized and negatively labeled (Sewell, 1997).

Innovator

Black males who are identified as 'innovators' are able to maintain an attitude that is pro-education. However, they are anti-school, but are able to achieve academic success (Sewell, 1997). Innovators have a desire and interest in educational success, but challenge the rules of the institution. Sewell notes that peer groups are a contributing factor influencing the behavior of 'innovators'. Black male students who are identified as 'innovators' often fall below the radar of faculty and administrators.

David was in the top set for most of his subjects, but his head of year [dean of class] told me that 'he would always be seduced by the anti-school behavior of the 'Posse.' However, we never have enough evidence to catch him. He is 'slippery like an eel.' David had developed the art of avoiding trouble at school, not because the teachers were after him, but, in his own words, because he was 'sneaky' and I find it easy to get away with things (Sewell, 1997, p.104).

Innovators view the education system and schools as the safer option versus the streets.

Due to racism and discrimination in society, the educational system is seen by innovators

as a way to be safe from harsh forms of discrimination and harassment from institutions like the police system. Innovators, overwhelmingly, “perceive the schooling process as repressive, exclusive, and racist,” (p. 109). Innovators are able to ‘complain’ about ‘bad schooling’ because the educational system’s ‘capitalist’ agenda conflicts with their communities. Ultimately, innovators want school sites to become “a ‘secure’ space in which to conduct their own social relations, which most of the time end up [in] exclusions” (p.109).

Finally, innovators are anti-school due to the stigma attached to ‘acting White’ by Black students who are perceived to be outside the ‘Black collective’. Innovators are also concerned with ‘hyper-heterosexual maleness,’ which is under ‘surveillance’ by Black males in and out of schools (Sewell, 1997).

Retreatist

The retreatist rejects both education and the schooling process. Retreatists are not interested in the primary ways of schooling or in the alternative processes. “Retreatist are never seen in groups of more than two and they resist schooling through subversion” (Sewell, 1997, p. 113). Sewell describes a junior participant in his study, Joseph: “He spends most of the day walking around the corridors. He claims never to have been ‘picked up’ by his class teachers who regard him as a ‘slow learner’” (1997, p. 111).

Retreatists reject education and schooling, and become ‘invisible’ to faculty and administrators. Retreatists do not confront the status quo, but, in effect, opt out of the schooling process. Sewell terms this ‘invisible resistance,’ but Black males are less likely to exhibit ‘invisible resistance’ in institutions where they are not the majority.

Rebel

Black male rebels reject education and schooling as based on a Eurocentric paradigm and view the schooling process as racist and biased towards Blacks. Rebels sometimes shift responsibility from themselves based on their own inability to racism and discrimination by faculty or administrators.

Rebels in their effort to reject schooling based on euro-centrism often assume a ‘Black nationalist’ persona. Sewell asserts,

a sub-category for ‘Black nationalism’ has emerged, called ‘community.’ The only text for those students is survival. They feel they have outgrown a schooling process designed to make them into social and academic failures. The rejection of the means and goals of schooling is replaced by a nationalism that sees them as ‘victims’ of a greater racist system (1997, p. 120).

Calvin, a senior, reports schools are where Blacks are exploited. Schools are places only for the naïve and ignorant to ‘real’ Black education (Sewell, 1997). Black education,

according to rebels, is the only way one learns how to make quick money and restores pride (Sewell, 1997).

Hedonist

Hyper-masculinity, females, music, clothes, sexuality, and violence pre-occupy the hedonist. Hedonist rejects education and schooling by identifying alternative forms of being. Hedonists feel they have been purposely excluded from the educational process, and therefore reject all 'mental labor' (Sewell, 1997). A sub-culture has emerged to reconcile the feeling of exclusion. Staples (1982) argue that Black males have been excluded from American society to such an extent that a subversive form of Black manhood emerged. This subversive form of manhood has become popularized in a number of Black communities through media and absent male figures.

As a result, many Black male students adopt a male identity that devoid of education (Sewell, 1997). According to Staples (1982), Black men are,

...denied equal access to the prosaic symbols of manhood, they manifest their masculinity in the most extreme form of sexual domination. When they have been unable to achieve status in the workplace, they have exercised the privilege of their manliness and attempted to achieve it in the bedroom. Feeling a constant need to affirm their masculinity, tenderness and compassion are eschewed as signs of weakness which leave them vulnerable to the ever-feared possibility of female domination (p. 85).

Hedonists reject education and the schooling process, in part, because they believe it conflicts with the expectations placed on them as 'men' (Sewell, 1997). The expectation of hedonists is based on two acts- 'making money' and 'making babies.' Black men become the source of both pleasure and danger to Whites (Gilroy, 1995). As a result, Black men hedonists internalize these stereotypes leading to exaggerated Black male identity- hedonism (Gilroy, 1995). Sewell suggests that the hedonist identity is constructed in opposition to the dominant culture (1997).

TABLE 2.1- SEWELL'S TYPOLOGIES (1997)

Conformists	Innovators	Retreatists	Rebels	Hedonists
<p>1) Willing to accept teacher's notion of male identities.</p> <p>2) They display what is considered appropriate behavior.</p> <p>3) Middle-class.</p> <p>4) Willing to speak 'good' English.</p> <p>5) Willing to manifest ability to move into alternative forms of knowledge other than what may exist in primary environment.</p>	<p>1) Unable to carry out desire for education in school context.</p> <p>2) Struggles between school norms and peer-groups.</p> <p>3) Invents own use of language.</p> <p>4) Believes in the purpose of education, but rejects the often times problematic ways of educating.</p>	<p>1) Rejects the means and goals of schooling</p> <p>2) No influence from social networks to inform perceived gaps in schooling</p> <p>3) No alternative to schooling</p> <p>4) Primary task is to reject work.</p>	<p>1) Reject school based on race.</p> <p>2) Feels schools are made of White racist teachers and based on a Eurocentric curriculum</p> <p>3) All of which are not in the best interest of Black people</p>	<p>1) Rejects means and goals of schooling.</p> <p>2) Replaces with clothes, style, and music of subculture.</p>

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Education does not occur on its own (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1984). Academic success in higher education requires preparation, financial support, familial support, intellectual prowess and discipline (Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1982, 2005, 2006-7). Black male collegians, more than any other gendered or racialized group, have the highest academic achievement gap (Strayhorn, 2006b). The research is overwhelming regarding the key factors needed to help Black males collegians be successful (Harper, 2012; Tinto, 2005). This research highlights four key factors important to the development of Black male identities. The four key factors are identified as: family, community (peers), school (faculty) and mentors. There are five Black male collegians used in this study, which are the primary participants. The four key factors (family, peers, faculty and mentor) are identified as secondary participants. A conceptual framework (see Table 2.2) has been developed to explain the relationship between the primary participants and the secondary participants.

PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS

Black Male Collegian

Identity formation among Black males is not easily defined (Noguera, 2003). According to Sewell, “Black boys are Angels and Devils...in schools” (1997, p. ix). People of Color

in American society have a long history of disenfranchisement when it comes to education (Staples, 1978). Black males, in particular, have had to face being labeled uneducable and tracked to lower academic levels (Davis, 2003; Ferguson, 2001). The literature is extensive on Black male retention and graduation rates from levels K-12 (Davis, 2003; Lewis et al., 2010; Schott Foundation, 2010, 2012). However, not much of the research explores how Black males construct their identity and what the implications are in educational settings, particularly on college campuses.

One cannot explore achievement, or lack thereof, by Black males in educational settings without also understanding their racial, ethnic, and gender identities (Bass & Coleman, 1997). The desire and motivation for Black boys to do well academically is in-part solidified by the male identities that they assume (Connell, 1996; Dalley-Trim, 2007; Ferguson, 2001; Sewell, 1997).

University campuses are fertile sites to explore the dynamics of race and gender identity construction among men of color (Dancy, 2007; Davis, n.d.; Harper, 2004; Strayhorn, 2006b). Black males have a number of different male models to choose from, both positive (i.e. college grad, doctor, lawyer, and entrepreneur) and negative (i.e. hustler, pimp, and drug dealer) (Staples, 1978). Too many Black males come from low-income household, which further compounds their situation (Staples, 1978, Strayhorn, 2008c). Black males must recognize and actively reject negative aspects present in the male identities around them and adopt those that will aid them in obtaining positive academic engagement (Majors & Billson, 1993). There are a number of external factors that

contribute to the male identities of Black males. If those factors are positive they will help Black males achieve academic goals and improve retention and graduation rates in higher educational settings (Strayhorn, 2008a).

SECONDARY PARTICIPANTS

Family

Family plays a significant role in the construction of male identity for Black men (Mandura, 2006; Staples, 1978). Family roles in the development of Black male identities for Black men are important in the following areas: (a) parenting styles, (b) physical discipline, (c) racial socialization, and (c) direct academic involvement (Mandura, 2006). According to Lewis et al., Black children 18 and under are three times more likely to live in a single parent household as compared to White children. Nearly 2/3 of Black children are reported to live in single parent homes (2010). Too often Black male children grow up without a father figure (Staples, 1978). While fathers are not required in the household to help their sons do well academically, they certainly help in providing a positive male model for Black boys to emulate (Mandura, 2006; Odih, 2002).

Family members, whether mother, father, sister, brother or grandparent, help introduce Black boys to male identities that they will either adopt or reject (Mandura, 2006).

Families also provide the financial support that collegians need to help them succeed

academically, especially in college (Tinto, 1994). Many of the male identities adopted by boys have been introduced and solidified through the family system (Dally-Trim, 2007). Self-identity, both in terms of gender and race, are, in part, fostered by the family (Polite & Davis, 1999). The family helps Black males identify male identities to adopt or reject. There is no universal male identity; however, there are a number of male identities that may require consistent “maintenance, renewal, repair and adjustment” (Dalley-Trim, 2007, p. 201). Families in many ways model the male identities that they want their sons to adopt. These identities are modeled through techniques that are “styled through and enacted on the body, [which] enables boys to position themselves as clearly identifiable...masculine subjects” (Dalley-Trim, 2007, p. 201).

Peers

Black male collegians receive confirmation and rejection of their male identities not just from their family, but also from peers. Strayhorn found a strong relationship between peer influence and aspirations of male collegians (2008b). “One way to help develop or maintain high aspirations is to surround [Black male collegians] with individuals who will nurture such thinking” (Strayhorn, 2008b, p.79). Peers in many cases help police the identities that males construct and perform in educational settings (Pascoe, 2007). Peers often set the standard regarding acceptable or unacceptable male behavior (Dalley-Trim, 2007). As such it is important to know the peer groups that Black male collegians associate with while matriculated. African American men are groomed to devalue

educational achievement because of societal messages that are internalized and reinforced by Black families and peers (Harper (2006b).

Black male students often alter their academic abilities to “fit-in” (Harper, 2006b). Some Black students, based on their peer groups, determine the recognizable successes that are associated with academic success and adjust their performance accordingly (Ogbu, 2003). High achieving Black male collegians associate with other high achieving peers in efforts to support one another (Harper, 2006a). However, there are a number of scenarios where Black male collegians interact with peers who do not support high academic achievement, opting to perform at low academic levels to avoid ridicule or labeled as “acting White” (Ogbu, 2003, Harper, 2006b).

College (Faculty or Administrators)

Several factors contribute to the low matriculation, retention, and graduation rates of Black males on the nation’s most competitive colleges and universities (Harper, 2012). Three factors have been identified as important to the academic success of Black male collegians, in particular, are: academic integration, academic self-confidence, and academic preparedness (Dancy, 2007, Davis 1994; Harper, 2010, 2012; Strayhorn, 2010; Tinto, 2005; Whiting, 2006).

Teacher expectations are important in helping to set the academic standard that a student is expected to meet (Foster, 1995; Harper, 2009; Rist, 2000; Whiting, 2006). Strayhorn

reports that “two-thirds of Black men who start college leave before earning their bachelor’s degree, representing the lowest degree-completion rate among both sexes and all racial groups” (2010, p. 311). Educators who teach Black males are not only charged with teaching the content of a given course, but also with promoting an identity that encourages academic success (Whiting, 2006). Many college classrooms and campuses have been identified as ‘cold’ to Black male students (Harper, 2010; Strayhorn, 2010). College classrooms and campuses like general society, have in many cases labeled Black males as troublesome and unintelligent (Davis, 1994). Black male students, on college campuses, are seen too often as present only because of their athletic abilities (Dancy, 2007, Hood, 1992, Sewell, 1997).

The Black male’s ability to integrate in the college culture is a predictor of whether he will graduate (Strayhorn, 2010; Harper, 2010, 2012). The college classroom helps to set the tone for a student’s comfort on campus. According to Harper (2012) many Black male undergraduates become disengaged from the university environment due, in part, to limited or non-existent relationships with faculty. Harper suggests recruiting more full-time faculty of color and change some of the responsibilities necessary for tenure (i.e. alter ‘publish or perish’ mentality to include more service) (2012).

Mentors

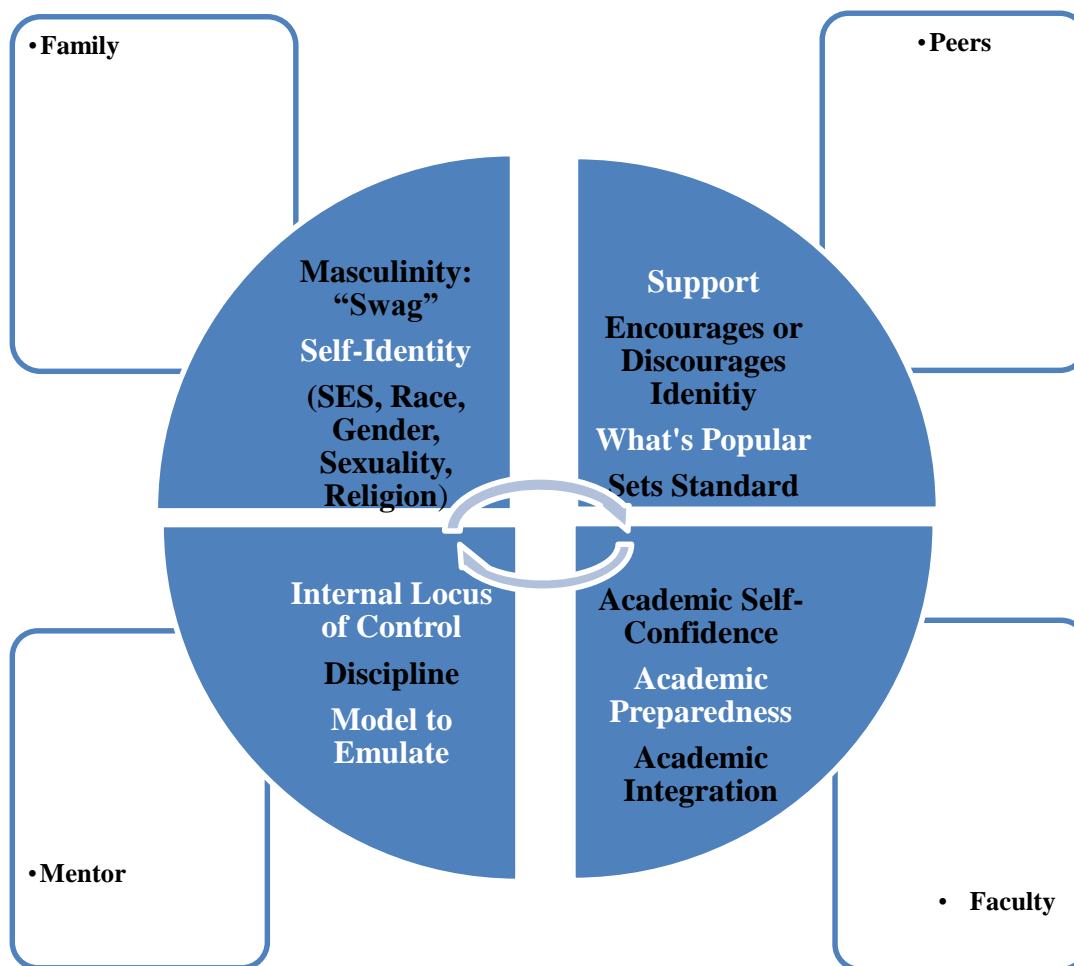
Mentoring provides the mentee with the necessary skills and characteristics to be successful both in higher education and professionally (Odih, 2002). Mentors help regulate and encourage positive constructions of male identities. According to Odih, oppressive male identities permeate black culture, closing off ways of thinking (2002). Mentors help to provide Black males collegians with leadership skills, improve learning strategies, develop professional goals, harness anger, cope with injustice, and set examples of positive male role models (Whiting, 2006). Mentors provide many Black collegians with exposure to people and environments that they many not ordinarily have access to (Whiting, 2006).

Unfortunately, the existence of positive Black male role models is limited in many communities (Staples, 1978; Majors & Billson, 1993). Even more alarming is the small number of faculty and administrators at many historically White institutions (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Harper, 2009, 2012). As a result, many Black male collegians in White institutions fail to come in contact with Black males of authority on their college campus. Thus, the skills needed by many Black male collegians to graduate and transition into the professional environment are undeveloped.

Black male students need to have an internal 'locus of control' (Whiting, 2006). An internal locus of control can be modeled by the experienced and professional Black male.

Black male role models, set an example of the behavior necessary to navigate the college setting. Black male collegians:

when they fail or do poorly... [become] willing to ask for help; they are not ashamed to say 'I am confused' or 'I do not understand'... they are less likely to blame low achievement, failure, or mistakes on teachers, families, and/or peers. Instead, they take responsibility..., while being mindful of outside pressures and social injustices (Whiting, 2006, p. 225).

TABLE 2.2- CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This study used a phenomenological case study design to understand the ways in which Black male collegians adopt and manifest masculinity in a higher education environment relevant to academic engagement. A qualitative research methodological approach is used because it recognizes the “socially constructed nature of reality” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5) conducted in a naturalistic setting. The essence of Patton contends that shared experience promotes appreciation of core meanings that are mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced within the culture (1998). I explored academic engagement from within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm and sought to understand the ways in which male identity is constructed by the participants using their own voices. This approach relied on the participants’ own perspectives, on the meanings of male identity in conjunction with racial identity that informed how they saw themselves in relation to the world, and more importantly, as “students” in higher education (Creswell, 2009). The study questions sought to describe the participants’ own narratives about their experiences related to the study phenomenon. Interviews were used as essential data sources for the qualitative inquiry (Bonner, 1997; Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998 and Yin, 2005).

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following study questions guided this study.

1. In what ways, does male identity formation amongst Black male collegians influence academic engagement?
- 2) How is Black male identity constructed and operationalized among matriculated undergraduate students at Rutgers- Newark?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a phenomenological dissertation research. Moustakas describes phenomenology as:

The challenge facing the human science researcher is to describe things themselves, to permit what is before one to enter consciousness and be understood in its meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection. The process involves a blending of what is really present with what is imagined as present from the vantage point of possible meanings; thus a unity of the real and the ideal (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 17).

I gained an understanding of how Black male collegians construct their male identity and how this supports or challenges their academic engagement. The relationship between Black male identity and academic engagement was the phenomenon investigated. Responses from the participants: Black male collegians, faculty/administrators, family, peers and mentors aided the researcher in answering the research questions.

Understanding the meaning from participants' own perspective is an asset to qualitative research and a qualitative approach has the advantage ability to provide description from the "emic" perspective of participants (Sadovnik, 2007).

Qualitative research allows for empirical inquiry into a phenomenon when there are no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and the context (Bonner, 1997). Qualitative research is preferred in examining contemporary events because it adds ... evidence from... interviews of the persons involved in the events (Yin, 2009). It is a strategy for inquiry when the researcher seeks to collect detailed information on one or more individuals (Creswell, 2009). If an individual seeks to utilize qualitative methodology he/she must operate with high ethical standards and seek to maintain confidentiality (Bonner, 1997). Throughout the study the researcher did not share data collected with anyone other than the interviewees and dissertation committee. Dancy states, "Case studies uniquely examine contextual issues of cause and effect" (2007, p. 153).

Merriam suggests that "the case as a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. [The Researcher] can 'fence in' what I am going to study. The case then could be a person such as a student..." (1998, p. 27). This research study used five cases based on each archetype discussed by Sewell (1997) and 28 secondary participants (family, peers, faculty/ administrators and mentor). The researcher interviewed faculty or staff, family members and peers for each participant in order to triangulate the information. According to Mathison (1988) triangulation when used in case studies

should rely on a “holistic understanding” of the situation to construct “plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied” (p.17).

As a part-time lecturer at Rutgers-Newark, the researcher was able utilize contacts on campus to gain referrals for students throughout the campus. The researcher obtained referrals from professional contacts (Dean of Equal Opportunity Fund, Director of Honors College, Dean of undergraduate program in the School of Public Affairs and Administration, Dean of Paul Robeson Campus Center, Basketball Coach and faculty) at Rutgers-Newark.

This dissertation is a case study that investigates the impact of the male identities amongst five Black male collegians and their academic engagement at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey- Newark. The study provided insight into the nexus between academic self-concept, engagement, motivation and male identity.

The participants in this study were traditional students (between 18-25 years of age as classified by Rootman, 1972; Tinto, 1978), matriculated as fulltime or part-time undergraduate students, may be campus residents or commuters (Rootman, 1972; Tinto, 1978), and self-identified as Black or African American male. The racial identification of Black and African American will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

ROLE OF RESEARCHER

The researcher is an instrument in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Dancy, 2007).

According to Patton:

The uniqueness of heuristic inquiry is the extent to which it legitimizes and places at the fore these personal experiences, reflections, and insights of the researcher. The researcher then comes to understand the essence of the phenomenon through shared reflection and inquiry with co-researchers as they also intensively experience and reflect on the phenomenon in question. A sense of connectedness develops between researcher and research participants in their mutual efforts to elucidate the nature, meaning, and essence of a significant human experience (2001, pg. 108).

Johnson argues that:

a rule for phenomenology is that there is never an object without a corresponding subject, and that [as Husserl quotes] ‘consciousness is always conscious of something.’ Given the universality of these structures for consciousness, it is reasonable to say that there is neither an impenetrable ‘white’ or ‘black’ experience, which are mutually exclusive, but rather that there are diverse human variations upon experience, which can always be communicated imaginatively or vicariously across racial, political and cultural lines through language in its two analytic form: philosophy and literature... it is presupposition of the philosophy of experience- phenomenology (as cited in Dancy, 2007, p. 137).

I attempted to put aside my pre-judgments, biases and preconceived ideas as well as maintained transparency throughout the research process. Journals were maintained to

document my own thoughts separate from the participants' own descriptions of their experiences (Dancy, 2007; Moustakas, 1997).

SITES

Rutgers-Newark

The researcher utilized an on campus conference room on the RU-N campus to conduct all the primary participant interviews. Interviews lasted between 50-70 minutes. The researcher met with all participants at their convenience. All primary interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Secondary participant interviews were conducted on campus, off-campus and via telephone. Secondary participant interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes. Several secondary participants consented to participating in the study, but declined to have it audio recorded. As such, the researcher utilized note-taking techniques and categorized the data according to themes.

Newark, New Jersey

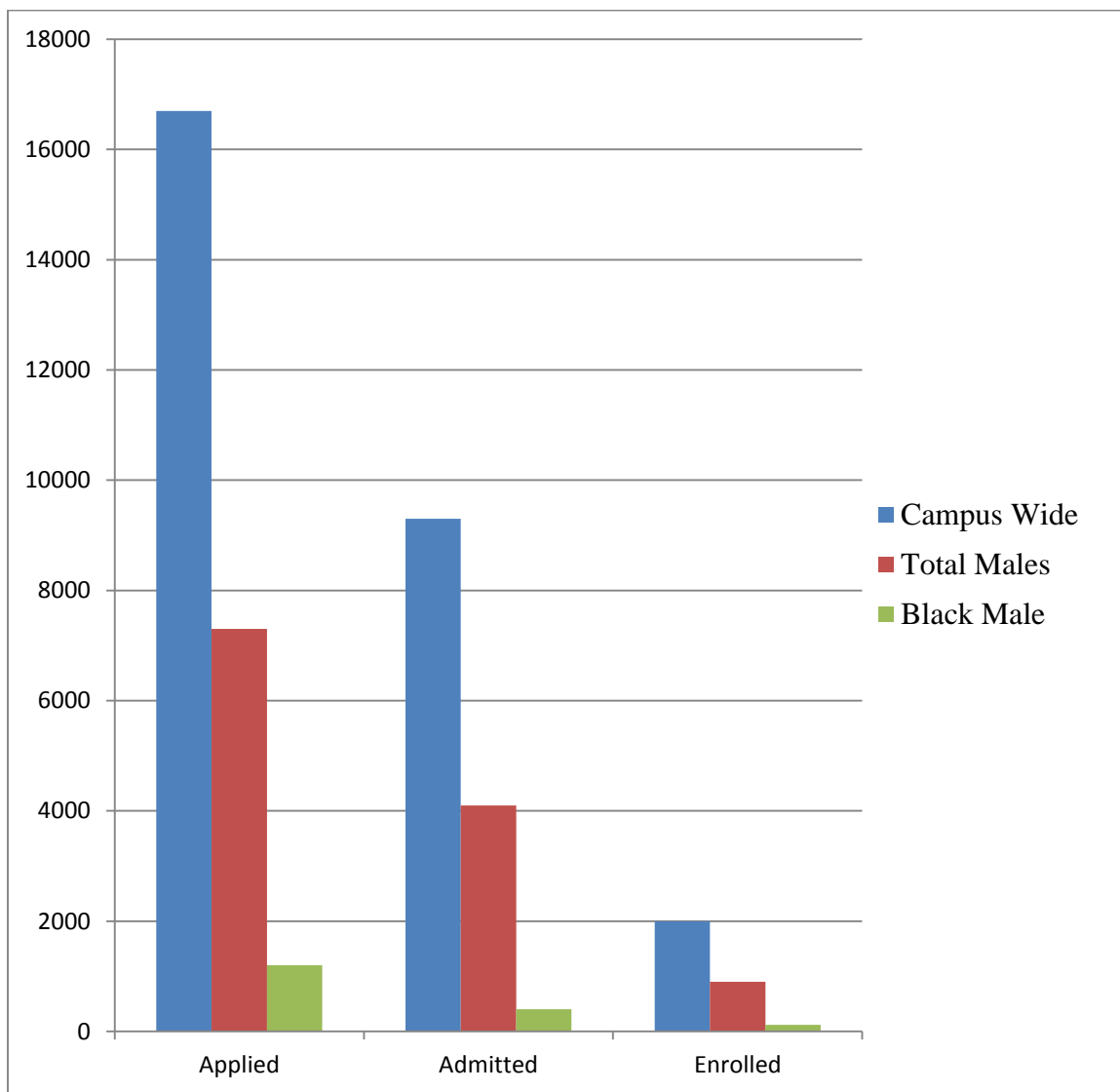
Newark, New Jersey is the largest city in the state of New Jersey with a land area of 24 square miles (U.S. Census, 2010). In 2010, the total population numbered 277,140. In 2000, 53.5% of the city is Black with a male population of 48.5%. High school graduation rate was 57.9%, which is 24.2% lower than the state's overall graduation rate

of 82.1% (US Census, 2000). In 2000, the number of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher was 9% as compared to 29.8% reported at the state level. Newark has an employment rate of 62% and an unemployment rate of 12% (U.S. Census, 2009-2013). According to the Schott Foundation for Public Education (2010) Newark graduates 75% of its Black male students from high school, a rate more than any other large school district in the country. Overall, Black male students graduate from high school throughout New Jersey at a rate of 69% compared to 90% for white males (Schott Foundation, 2010).

Despite, the significantly high graduation rates of Black males in the state (NJ) and in the city (Newark), Black male matriculation and graduation rates have been alarmingly low and high attrition rates at RU-N. RU-N had about 16,700 students apply as first-year or transfer undergraduates for fall 2014. Only 9,300 were admitted and 2000 students were matriculated (Rutgers, 2014-2015). Rates for Black male applicants are more glaring. Black male applicants for the RU-N campus was 1200, of which, 400 were admitted. Black males who matriculated for fall 2014 totaled only 120 (Rutgers, 2014-2015).

TABLE 3 .1- NUMBER OF STUDENTS APPLIED, ADMITTED AND ENROLLED FOR RU-N

Fall 2014



Source: Rutgers- University Fact Book 2014-2015

PARTICIPANTS

After receiving approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher used professional contacts, convenient and snowball sampling to recruit Black male participants at Rutgers-Newark. Participants often provide the best resource for referring potential participants (Dancy, 2007; Patton, 2001). Sewell's (1997) typologies of Black male identities were adopted for this study. The five primary participants completed a pre-participant questionnaire (see Appendix D) to determine their eligibility for this study. The pre-participant questionnaire took about 10 minutes for each student to complete. The pre-participant questionnaire responses determined compatibility with the proposed study. Once a primary participant was deemed eligible for the study the participant completed the typology questionnaire (see Appendix E and Appendix F). The typology questionnaire took about 10 minutes to complete. The researcher was present during the administering of both the pre-participant questionnaire and the typology questionnaire. The typology questionnaire was used to determine a participant's compatibility with one of the identified educational male typologies (conformist, retreatist, innovator, rebel and hedonist) (see Appendix F). The researcher made the final determination regarding eligibility in the study based on pre-participant responses. Five primary participants (Black Male Collegians) were interviewed and asked to identify two Rutgers faculty or staff (who can speak to the student's involvement on campus), two peers (Rutgers or non-Rutgers students), two significant family members and one mentor to be interviewed by the researcher (see Table 3.2).

The researcher utilized purposive and convenience sampling for this study. There are no firm rules for sample size in qualitative research (Patton, 2001). “Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources” (Patton, 2001, p. 244).

The researcher solicited the assistance of professional staff (Dean of Equal Opportunity Fund, Director of Honors College, Dean of Paul Robeson Campus Center, Dean of Undergraduate Program in the School of Public Affairs and Administration, Basketball Coach, Track and Field Coach and faculty) on the Rutgers- Newark campus for assistance in recruiting study participants.

TABLE 3.2- SECONDARY PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW CHART**N= 28**

	Zion	Luke	John	Mustafa	Josh
Family (2)	Family Member # 1 Family Member # 2	Family Member # 1 Family Member # 2	Family Member # 1 Family Member # 2	None	Family Member # 1 Family Member # 2
Peer (2)	Friend # 1 Friend # 2	Friend # 1 Friend # 2	Friend # 1 Friend # 2	Friend # 1 Friend # 2	Friend # 1 Friend # 2
Faculty/ Administrator (2)	Faculty #1 Faculty # 2	Faculty # 1 Faculty # 2	Administrator # 1 Administrator # 2	Administrator # 1 Administrator # 2	Faculty # 1 Administrator # 2
Mentor (1)	None	Family Member # 2	Administrator # 1	Administrator # 1	None

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

I solicited professional staff (e.g. dean of student affairs, Dean of educational opportunity program, Dean of Paul Robeson Campus Center, Dean of undergraduate program in the School of Public Affairs and Administration and faculty (various departments) on the Rutgers- Newark campus for assistance in recruiting participants. Once students were referred to the researcher, the researcher made contact with the referred students electronically and via phone. I asked the referred students to complete a pre-participant questionnaire (see Appendix D) to determine their eligibility for this study. Participants identified faculty (school), peers (community), mentor and family members to be interviewed by the researcher (see Appendix D). Researcher interviewed individuals from each area (family, peers, school); however only one mentor was interviewed per student, if identified by the participant (see Appendix B consent I-V). A number of studies have identified the lack of positive role models and mentors for Black males (Ferguson, 2001; Harper, 2006; Ogbu, 2004; Strayhorn, 2008a, 2009). Due to the challenges in identifying mentors for this group, the researcher included one student despite being unable to identify a mentor.

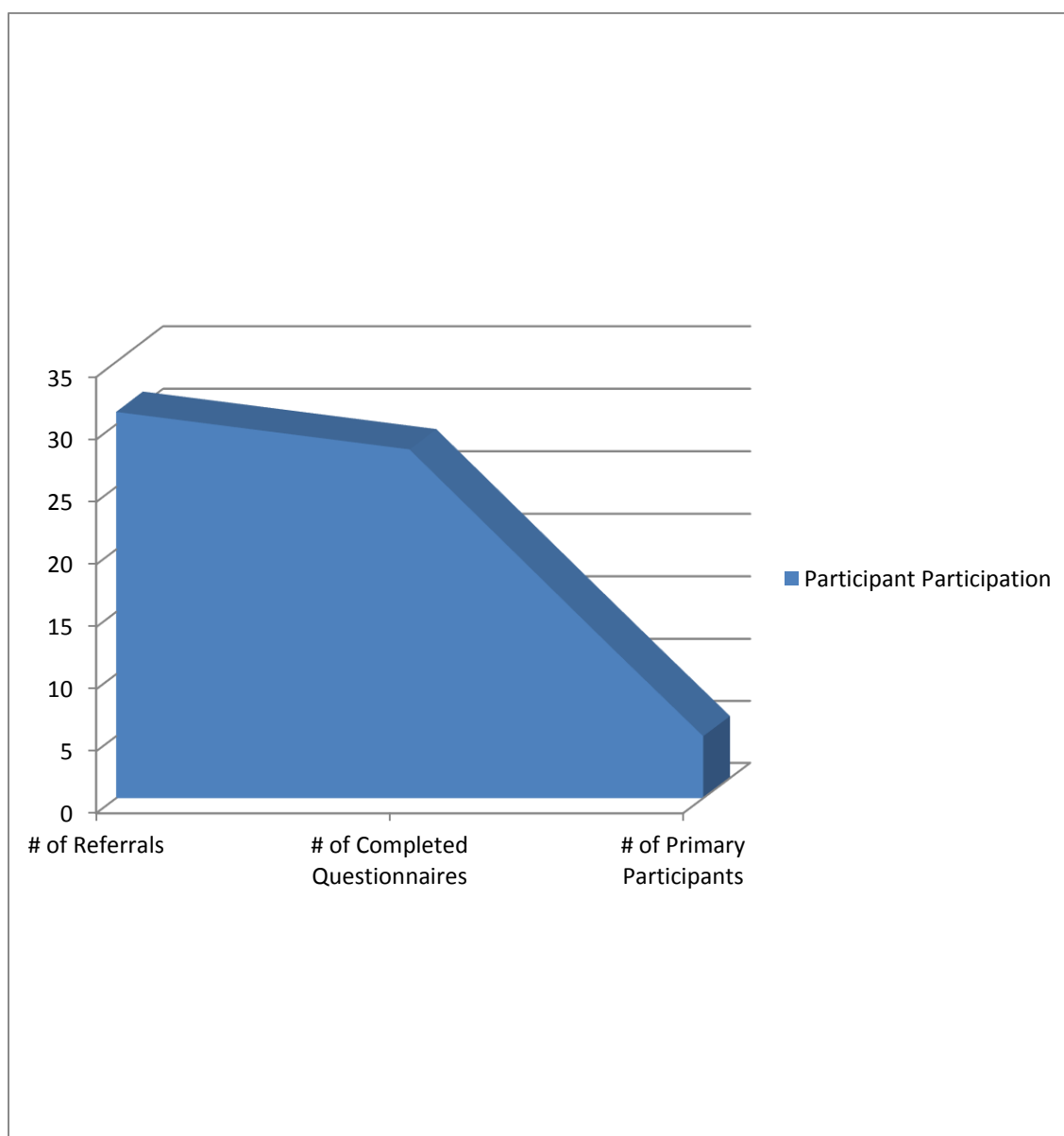
The goal of the interviews were to have the participant inform the researcher regarding the ways they construct and perform their male identity. Further, the participants informed the researcher about the relationship between said identity and their academic engagement. Students were recruited based on professional staff recommendations and

referrals from participants (see Appendix C). Each student was interviewed individually at a campus location convenient to study participant. Written consent for participation in the study and audio recording was obtained by the researcher (see Appendix B consent I). The researcher interviewed peers, family, instructors /staff and mentors identified by the participant (see Appendix B consent II-V). Open ended questions were used in the one-on-one interviews to assist the researcher in understanding the ways in which the indicated student's male identity has been constructed, manifested and performed (see Appendix G). All interviews were confidential (see Appendix B). In order to maintain confidentiality pseudonyms are used for each interviewee in the final analysis of this dissertation study.

Participants completed a pre-participant screening questionnaire (see Appendix E) created by the researcher to determine their eligibility for the study. Approximately 31 students were referred for the study (see Table 3.3). Out of the 31 students that were referred, 28 students completed the pre-participant screening questionnaire. The typology questionnaire consisted of 30 questions created from the definitions of each typology. Pre-participants responded to the questions on the questionnaire using a five option Likert scale (see Appendix E). The questions were reviewed and approved by two members of dissertation committee for relevance and validity. The questions on the questionnaire were randomized on the document to avoid recognition advantage pre-participants. All 28 students completed the typology questionnaire in the presence of the researcher to ensure confidentiality as well as to answer any questions about terms or

concepts mentioned on the questionnaire. The typology questionnaire (see Appendix E) took about 10 minutes for each student to complete. The questionnaire responses helped the researcher determine compatibility with the proposed study. Only one questionnaire was completed per potential participant for the researcher to determine their eligibility. The researcher made the final determination as to which potential participants were chosen and utilized for this study.

The five participants identified at least two Rutgers faculty or staff that had a level of involvement with the participant and could provide insight to their academic ability. Each participant identified two significant family members who they felt were influential in the construction and orientation of their male identity. These persons had knowledge of the student and were able to provide insight to the primary participant's male identity and academic performance. The participant identified two peers who provided insight about his male identity either in or out of the Rutgers-Newark setting. Finally, the participant identified at least one mentor who provided additional insight to the primary participant's male, academic or professional identities. In order to be considered a mentor the participant need to only identify the individual as such.

TABLE 3.3-PARTICIPANT PARTICIPATION

The Interview-Guide

An interview protocol was devised by the researcher for the purposes of this dissertation research. Patton posits that an interview in qualitative research consists of three types: informal conversation, general interview guide and standardized open ended-interview (2001). The researcher used informal interviewing and standardized open-ended interviews to generate participants' descriptions of their experiences. I departed from the protocol when necessary, in order to explore new areas of questioning based on participant responses, but the interview protocol was based on several empirical studies (Bonner, 1997; Dancy, 2007; Sewell, 1997).

The range, wording and appropriateness of questions included in the interview guide were informed by an expert in the field of education: Dr. Fred Bonner II., (Rutgers [at time of study]- now Prairie View A&M University) and Dr. Sherri-Ann Butterfield (Rutgers), chair of my dissertation committee. Questions were also informed by the theory and research on recruitment, retention and persistence in higher education and Black male identity and manhood. I used an interview protocol for each type of participant (Black male collegian, family, faculty/ administrator, peers and mentors) [see Appendix G for interview protocols]. I transcribed all interviews where audio recording consent was given. Primary participants reviewed the final transcripts for accuracy.

Semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2001) were conducted individually for primary and secondary participants. The researcher used informal interviewing and standardized open-ended interviews (see Appendix G) for this study. Interview times for the primary participants ranged between 50-70 minutes. Secondary participant interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes. Some of the secondary participant interviews were voice recorded. Many secondary participants opted to participate in this study, but did not want their interview audio recorded. There were several cases where family and peers opted to be interviewed via phone, despite the researcher's willingness to meet the secondary participant at a location convenient to them. As such, I kept notes and took dictation based on the participant's responses. In the case of secondary participants who did not give written consent, oral consent was obtained by the researcher. Due to the nature of the topic, the researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule during the interview; however, the researcher maintained an informal and relaxed atmosphere for the participant. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews that allowed the participant to help direct the path of the interview which allowed for richer data to be collected.

The data was analyzed both categorically and contextually. The researcher utilized a number of techniques in the coding of the data: (1) line-by-line and incident-by-incident coding (2) focus coding (3) axial coding and (4) theoretical coding.

The data were first coded line-by-line or incident-by-incident, based on the best fit for the coding approach specific to the individual participant. Naming each line of written data is defined as line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006; Dancy, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Charmaz contends line-by-line [and incident-by incident] coding assists researchers to “remain open to the data to see the nuances in it,” (2006, p. 50). The researcher also coded themes with action terms (i.e. feeling ostracized, not feeling good enough) to keep the codes close to the data, show action and expose dilemmas (Charmaz, 2006; Dancy, 2007). Ascribing action terms allowed the research to maintain a close reading of the data to the lived experiences of the participants (Dancy, 2007).

It is important to extract the phenomenon for serious inspection from the world around it (Denzin, 1989). The researcher dissected the participant responses from the transcript and grouped them according to theme. Key phrases and statements that related to the phenomenon were identified, extracted and grouped for analysis. Throughout the process I maintained a separation between my thoughts, assumptions and reactions from the data used in the analysis.

First, all codes that were relevant to the participant’s experiences were listed that contained a moment of the experience (i.e. manhood construction, perception of faculty or staff) for understanding the broader phenomena; and were abstracted and labeled into themes separately from irrelevant expressions. This process provides the most focused analytical sense to categorize data (Charmaz, 2006). According to Dancy (2007), “axial

coding specifies the properties and dimensions of a category” (p. 152). Contextual analytic procedures were used in tandem with categorical analysis. The researcher compared the majors themes from individual participants to the totality of the interviews to determine patterns of consistency and difference. Charmaz contends that theoretical coding consists of substantive codes that relate to each other (2006). Once the categorical data analysis was completed they were contextualized to each individual case.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.

--- Ralph Ellison

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I disclose narratives, reflections and experiences of each case: Zion, Luke, Mustafa, John and Josh as they reported them to the researcher. Each case (primary participant) and their family, peers, mentor and college affiliates (secondary participant) gave voice to the importance to the nexus of gender and race for Black male collegians at an urban university. The researcher used information gathered from the secondary participants to help inform the researcher about the primary participants.

Demographic Profile of Participants

Table 4.1 shows the summary of participant demographic background. Study participants ranged between 20-24 years of age. While there were no grade point average (GPA) requirements for this study, participants self-reported GPAs ranging from 2.8 to 3.4. Participants comprised of four upper-class students and one with less than two years in

college. Their academic majors included social work, criminal justice, nursing, psychology and public service. Only one participant reported membership in the Honors College at Rutgers-Newark. Four of the study participants are from urban communities and one living in a middle-class suburban community in a Southern state on the east coast.

Study participants self-reported family backgrounds with primary caregivers consisting of parents and other primary caregivers such as another relative. Three participants were raised in a two-parent household and two were raised by one-parent or another relative. Three participants reported annual household family incomes of \$60,000 plus with two reporting family incomes below \$30,000. Only two participants indicated participation in sports or a student organization on campus. Two students maintain employment on campus which requires involvement with student organizations, faculty and staff. All five participants indicated they were involved with sports or student organizations while in high school.

TABLE 4.1- PRIMARY PARTICIPANT CHART

	Zion	Luke	John	Mustafa	Josh
Age	22	24	21	23	20
GPA	3.4	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0
Major	Psychology Women and Gender Studies	Social Work Anthropology Sociology	Criminal Justice	Nursing	Public Administration
College Level	Senior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Sophomore
Organization	Yes	No	No	No	No
Sports	No	No	No	No	Yes
On/Off Campus	Off	Off	Off	Off	On
Head of Household	Mother	Two-Parent	Other Family	Two- Parent	Two-Parent
Household Income	Less than \$30,000	\$60,000- \$90,000	Less than \$30,000	\$60,000- \$90,000	\$60,000- \$90,000

INDIVIDUAL CASE PROFILES

Zion

Zion is 22 years old and a graduating senior at Rutgers-Newark who lives off campus. He reported a grade point average of a 3.42 majoring in Psychology, and Women and Gender Studies. Zion was raised in a single-parent household with his mother as the primary caregiver and his grandmother provided primary care duties for an extended period of time while he was growing up. Zion reported his household income to be less than \$30,000 annually. While in high school, Zion maintained a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale and was active on the Track and Field. While at Rutgers-Newark he is a member of RU Pride, an LGBT student organization.

Luke

Luke is a 24 year old senior commuter with a triple major in social work, anthropology and sociology with a grade point average 2.8. Luke was raised in a two-parent household in an urban community with a median household income of \$60,000-\$90,000 annually. In high school, Luke had a grade point average of 2.9 on a 4.0 scale and was active in high school athletics, particularly baseball, basketball, and track and field.

John

John at the time of this study was a 21 year old junior at Rutgers-Newark. John's major was criminal justice. He indicated that his grade point average was 2.9. John was raised by his sister and aunt. John identified his family income as less than \$30,000. John was a commuter. John reported that his grade point average in high school was a 2.7. He also reported being active in athletics- football.

Mustafa

Mustafa is 23 years old and a senior in the nursing program. He lives off-campus with his family in a suburban community not far from RU-N. He indicated a grade point average of 3.0. In high school his grade point average was a 3.7 on a 4.0 scale and he was active on the football and basketball teams. Mustafa was raised in a two-parent household with median annual family income of \$60,000-\$90,000.

Josh

Josh is a 20 year-old sophomore who lives on campus and is part of the Honors College. His major is Public and Non-Profit Administration with a current grade point average of 3.0. He is active on the University's Track and Field team. Josh was raised in a two-

parent household with a median income of \$60,000-\$90,000, annually. While in high school Josh maintained a 4.2 grade point average on a 5.0 scale and was active in several extra circular activities while such as track and field, drama, gospel choir and the debate team.

EMERGING THEMES

College is the Only Option

A re-occurring theme throughout all five cases was the notion that if they were not in college than they would not be able to survive. All of the primary participants discussed how various family members believed in them for a brighter future. College, as a result, became the only option. Zion stated:

Right, I have one friend that I'm pretty close with from high school still. And she is the only one that went to college. It was like we kind of went through it together so it kept us connected, but then the rest of my friends, most of them either have children now or just working jobs [or] at home and then my family, it's almost the same. A lot of them are just working or trying to find jobs and stuff like that so. Like my older brother and sisters they have their household and stuff like that, but none of them are really doing, I guess, things that mom didn't do, or my grandmother didn't do, or my aunts and uncles didn't do. It's kind of a repetition. I would definitely say my grandmother. I lived with her when I was younger so and she pushed me and pushed me and...especially one of my cousins that college is the only way. She told me like look around until I realized it, so that's what I did, even after she passed away I kept looking around to see the differences and disparities in my family. The people that didn't go to college and the people that did and the way they lived. It was just two different lifestyles so there was

only one that I wanted to, so that is the way I took.

Similarly, Luke also did an assessment of those around him and determined that college was the best route. He stated, “Because of my past experiences, I want to better the lives of others and other males, Black males, like myself that college is for everyone can make it to college as long as you are determined and you have that notion of self-preservation and that you can really move forward...” Luke’s family member #1 states, “What else would he do, if he didn’t go to college? Sell drugs? Work at Walmart? College was his only option.” Josh states:

It hasn’t changed, but it has become more pronounced. Not based on people on campus like friends or faculty are saying or doing anything, but I’m growing up and becoming more mature and realizing the realities. I had the impressions of the limitations of Black people and Black males face in society, but being more mature and reading more, based on the type of courses that I’m taking. As a public service major I’m looking at a lot of information based on the urban experience, the knowledge from the things that I learned in class has helped me to realize more so what it means to be African American and being male. My view hasn’t changed but more so confirmed so I’ve been in college. That also helps to keep me motivated a determined to continue to do what I need to do and try to help others like friends, in regards to motivate them to succeed as well.

John echoes the same sentiments of self-preservation and hope for the future, “So I have to do what I have to do for myself...I didn’t have any other alternatives other than being in school and trying to get to the next step. I’m waiting to get to the point where I can look back at my accomplishments and really appreciate the journey, that’s why I’m doing the work now and view of academics have changed. I want to get there and be the contradiction to the stereotypes of Black males coming from where I come from.”

Recognize the Standard and Challenge it

Most participants reflected the desire “to be better than the rest” and their belief that they were held to a higher standard than other undergraduate students. John reflected:

Yeah, being Black and male is difficult in today’s society. Especially how I choose to dress, how I choose to wear my hair and things like that. It already is hard being Black male, but those things added make it even harder. Dealing with some of the stereotypes that might come, some of the prejudice ideas or thoughts towards [me], even before having a conversation that makes things difficult [for me].... Being of a certain race or ethnicity or minority in the majority... so it’s little things that I feel like I can’t do because I’m a Black male. Such as, sitting in back of the classroom or be late or something like that, because there is already a stigma on me because I am a Black male, so I have to make sure that I am on time even earlier if I can be, sit towards the front. I make sure the professor gets to know who I am. I ask questions, I participate and things like that. Whereas the next student might not have to do as much, but I feel like I have to because of some of the stereotypes that are placed on me.

John described his experience in the classroom:

I think it’s different especially for the first [time] that I participate or before, I guess, we actually share ideas. I almost don’t think much about what I am going to say, but at the same time it’s like all eyes on me when I do get ready to say something. That’s something I’ve been trying to figure out now for a while. Is it because my voice is so commanding, is it because it’s the big Black guy about to say something, is it because he might be saying something intelligent or he about to say something dumb. I don’t know what it is but I just notice that eyes are on me. So it’s those time where I get called on I feel it and I deliver what I am going to say and it’s like most times [people] agree that it was a good point or [the professor] would say that is exactly what I was looking for. It changes things slowly over the semester or the class...

Being a college student is not easy and challenging for a Black male as demonstrated by

Luke's statement:

....There's like this notion that growing up in the schools that I went to, Black males really don't, we really don't try and engage in the school work. Growing up through that and just being maybe the class clown, we would like to get the attention. There was not much discipline in the classroom. So there was not much engagement....So growing up I was always quiet in the classroom unless I had to answer questions in the class then ok, but otherwise I would stick to myself. I think referring back to your question, in college, if I showed more expression and engaged in the discussions, the teacher would be aware that I am really listening, I can really engage and do better. He or she would see my efforts, I think, that would be a way to see the outside influences as a Black male in my society conflict with what happens in the classroom as a Black male...Where I would just go into the classroom sit down and I would just mind my business and not really show I am engaging, but I really am. I'm taking my notes. I'm just not outspoken, but; however, I do come to class sometimes with the idea that 'you know what, today I need to speak.

Josh added:

Yeah. For Black men, we have a double standard in society as compared to every other race. I feel like we have to go over the top. We have to go beyond the regular standards for anybody else just to make it. I feel like even then it may not be accepted. Going over and beyond to achieve in the workplace or in school, either in honors or other classes, the [expectation] level is a little different. I just feel like we have to do a lot more to get where other men in society get. Even then people, I guess, don't accept it. There's a lot of issues with that, with people of your own race don't accept you for things that you are doing because of what has been deemed white [acting white] a way of acting or whatever. If you do things that your race 'says' you are not allowed to do you are labeled a 'sellout.' At white men, in general, don't accept you, even when you do all you can, you bust your butt, you work hard, you have this position and obtained this level of education. They just don't accept you, I guess, because we are supposed to be inferior.

Mustafa reports the feeling of being undervalued by faculty, “that’s how professors talk to me. They say things that imply that I’m not on par.” As such Mustafa responds with calculating and non-threatening demeanor:

One thing I try to do is never raise my voice, to calmly express certain ideas on certain things and if something happens that I don’t like or am not comfortable with, I bring it to someone’s attention in an eloquent way to not offend but to establish an understanding.... I try not to dwell on it only because I have come to learn to expect it and I’ve learned to pick my battles. Some you are going to win and some you are going to lose. I figure once I get my degree or degrees, I won.

Mustafa’s mentor (Administrator #1) reminded him to, “keep your head down and your mouth shut! It was important for me to let him know that his academic career often times falls in the hands of faculty and administrators. As such, it is important to watch what you say and to whom you say [it].”

Street Credibility

Some Black men osculate between two identities, as a student or a “street thug” (Majors, 1993; Staples, 1978 and Whiting, 2006). Luke narrated:

I feel like I’m living a double life, where I have friends that I have grown up with for a long period of time. So I really associate myself with them more than I associate with the friends at Rutgers. If there is a group project, for example, and we all have to exchange numbers and keep in contact with each other and meet up then I’m point. We are

going to always keep meeting up and stay in contact and build some type of relationship ... there wouldn't be much problems. But it would be totally different with the friends I have that are not in college. I don't know, it's like mind blowing. I treat them the same. I treat them the same, but my behavior maybe different with the students at Rutgers than the people of streets where on the streets you have to be manly. You can't really show a soft side of you unless it's a particular person that you know personally that you guys have a great relationship where you can relax and show that side of you versus whereas a person you don't know, you can't really show because they are going to see that you weak. That's what they are thinking, that you weak. Then you have to go to that [point] and show that you are not weak and it escalates to the next. However, at Rutgers these students are more disciplined. They have a better understanding of life and how to conduct themselves so it's like living a double life and so I on the first interaction on the first contact that I may meet a person, a student at Rutgers. I already know how to adjust myself to be friendly, how to approach them. [I know] how to let them speak when they are talking and active listening and things like that. Basically, how to conduct myself, but on the outside it's totally different. You have to conduct yourself differently. It's a shift.

Luke described the internal conflict between his desire to be a college graduate and a "homie" from the streets:

I think it's because when I am involved with Rutgers students, I tend to feel the shift, internally. I can feel the shift where I think that I start to feel like a 'nerd' or something like that. Then, I'll say I got to get back to my environment. I'm part of the streets also. I have the ideology that although I'm a college student I am a 'street dude.' The status that I have in the [street] environment, they know me. I can walk the environment and gain the respect and attention, whereas in the college environment I don't have a status. I'm building my status. The shift is something unexpected. It's not a feeling that, it's something new. It's not something I have adjusted to because it's leaving one social life to another social life.

Luke's friend#2 indicated that he, "[doesn't] trust those 'college boys,' they think they too good. I only still fuck with Luke because we grew up together. I see a change in him though. If he was anyone else, we would have stopped chilling a long time ago."

Mustafa revealed his own internal conflict and the need to persevere in order to succeed academically:

I know I never wanted to be a failure. I've always wanted to be competitive in everything that I do i.e. sports or academics. Once I got to college and got out my slump I was able to compete with the rest of them. Throughout all of that I was able to learn a great deal about myself about what I could take and let go. It was trial and error. You see what works and you see what doesn't. The end product from undergrad is worlds different from who and what I was when I first got here.

John echoed the same conflict, "...honestly, I think about am I perpetuating the stereotype at times. I always try to think about the stereotype at hand and if there is any way to kind of avoid it...At times I don't feel like I can be who I am, because, I have to always worry what's coming next." John described one instance in the following:

For example, in a class..., earlier in the semester I missed a few classes my grandmother passed away and I missed a few classes. I think I missed like three classes in a row so when I came back they were preparing for the midterm and I asked a question about something I missed. Even the professor gave a remark like "if you were here you would have known that." And I was like ok...I see where this is going. So after class I decided to have a little conversation [with the professor] saying "I didn't mean for you to feel disrespected about me missing your class or anything like that my grandmother passed away and I needed to take some time off" she was "ok I understand that." It was funny because it wasn't like I understand and I hope you are doing better, but more like I [professor saying] I lost a lot of people during my college career and I had to still come to class and everything. [John] alright ok, I see I'm have to do some work to kind of prove this professor wrong. It started first with the midterm review, we had a jeopardy game and I'm answering most of the questions. I'm challenging some answers she gave and asking questions on top of that, I'm participating in class with whatever topic we are talking about.

I'm putting in my input and it slowly started to change. To the point where we got to the review before the final and it's supposed to be a debate and it felt like it was me against the other team and it was just one of those don't let John talk on this one. And by the end of the class going into the final all I needed was a 70 to get an A for the class and I bet she didn't think that I would be here from way back when I was missing those classes... at times it's funny proving them wrong. Cause they [are] just looking at the outside.

Covering

Ogbu's (2003) research highlights the struggles some young people of color endure in academic settings. His study of Black students in a predominately white school found that the label "acting white" though a superficial, non-existent category regulated the academic success of the Black students (Ogbu, 2003). Further, Black students would sabotage their own academic success in order to fit in to the majority of other Black students, even if that meant failing or misbehaving. Luke experienced the same phenomenon of covering:

Language is very important. By going to college and some of the great schools that I went to, such as the boarding school, I learned how to expand my vocabulary. So conducting myself with students in Rutgers I would have to switch the language for when I [talk] to people in the streets. People in the streets don't have that expansion in their vocabulary whereas their vocabulary is limited to derogatory words and slang language. They can't really understand me if I'm speaking in college language. When I am talking to people in the streets I feel like I am more relaxed...Because I hung around with many friends that speak slang, so I'm used to speaking in slang language with them versus speaking with a Rutgers student where I have to constantly try to have them understand me.

John concurred, "...Just the language I use with my friends at certain times in certain places, I feel like I have to tune it down or tell my friends don't say that because of where we are. But I feel like it is not the same for other races at times..." According to John's friend#1:

There's no way for John to hide who he is, or even try to fit in because of who he is. He is intimidating to most. I know that he's not, but most don't see him past being a big scary figure....There are a lot of different things he has gone through in life that helped make him a good person. But he is almost 6'3, 250lbs, dark skin, beard and dreadlocks. He's the big Black guy now because of his size. So anything he says or does is looked at differently than everybody else.

Several participants came to the realization the importance of racial identity. Zion related how he came to self-identify through his membership in a student organization on campus:

I think the hardest part was, it wasn't even being gay at that point it was me... We were at a queer students of color- it was called CRUNCH it's like we have brunch, it was every other Monday or Wednesday it was one of them and the queer students of color got together and I didn't even realize I was saying it but I was. When we were talking in conversation I was, when I would refer to people that were Black I would say "they" I wouldn't say we I would say 'they' and I got called out on it and I think that is what really started it cause it went on for months and the group eventually stopped because of the whole ordeal. I think that was the first time that I was really confronted with anything regarding my race, because I never, it never mattered to me before. It took me almost 22 years and I'm 22 now to realize that I was Black so that was one of the reasons I hated going there because I was constantly confronted, it wasn't like I was confronted about my sexuality because just about everyone there was gay but me being a black guy going in there and not realizing it was probably one of the biggest things that kind of turned me off to the office as a whole.

Zion further explained:

It never mattered, even though... I grew up in a predominately white town and I was like always the only Black kid in most of my classes and stuff like that. I don't know if my grandmother and mom did it deliberately, but it just happened that they never talked about race or social economic class, sexuality or stuff like that. It never mattered so you just were who you were. I think I valued that for many, many years. Then coming here to Newark and just seeing the disparities between this community and like Livingston or West Orange and stuff like that or Upper Montclair, you have to wonder why these things are happening so I guess I was confronted with it and didn't want to really face it at that time. I had classes and stuff going on and I was interning there too so I had some credits bearing to it and I didn't want to let it distract me too much, but it was pounding on me every single day that I had to go in there [LGBT Center] to explain to people why I said they and not we. Why I wasn't claiming the Black title and they asked me to identify adjectives to describe myself and I didn't use Black in any of them. So I think it constantly was coming up in conversation every single day and I don't know why I didn't realize it and now I feel more connected to it now more than ever and it is almost like primary to me but it's taken like almost a semester, an entire semester reading up and talking to a lot of my friends on campus and in Newark and stuff like that. Not back at home, because they don't understand, but in Newark primarily, I think, to realize it that I can claim my culture, and appreciate it, not just be oblivious to anything that's going on around me and, I guess, essentially I come from.

Emulate from Afar

The literature is clear, mentorship for African American men in college is essential (Harper, 2006c, 2008). Several participants indicated that they did not have a formal mentor/mentee relationship, but had a more informal relationship with mentors. John reported:

There are different people for different points in my life. Up until my dad passed away, my father was number one...After my father passed away it wasn't real role models for me, there were people that I just kind of wanted to look up to but it wasn't necessarily mutual. It wasn't that they looked out for me it was just like I would look at certain things about them and I wanted to mimic or almost get to where they are. Sometimes they don't even know...So he referred me to this dean's class. He said he didn't know about the class because it was his first time teaching it, but he said he was a good guy and he thought I would be alright in his class. Ever since then the communication between us, I look to him as a mentor. I don't if he actually knows it or not, but there have been doors that he has opened up for me that I definitely appreciate him for...It's like he told me what I need to do and now I'm going to do it and see how it happens. If it doesn't work out from his point of view or his side; at least I got what I need to do what I need to do or do something else. So it's been like him and now being in college it's like I'm looking around for more people that look like me [who] are at a point where I deem success. People that have vacation days, people that can support their children, people that do have a nice car, people that dress nice every day.

John's mentor (Administrator # 1) affirmed,

I've seen John watching me and how I deal with things in the office. He unlike many of the Black males I came across is willing to listen and learn. He might've come from the streets, but he isn't willing to let it define who he is or become. When we hang out and talk, I would say it's more like a mentor/mentee role, but we never called that. We just kind of clicked. After getting to know him I cared about his well-being and academic future.

Mustafa validated many of the points raised by John, "My Dean now, he is another good influence in my life that has helped me grow. And whoever else I can kind of just sponge off of. In the sense that you just absorb whatever it is they have to give. You keep what's good and use it to your benefit." Luke recalls guys from his neighborhood he used as role models:

There was a few. About two, yeah. And these were like the oldest of us all. And so, really we were never really personally acquainted. It was just, how can I explain it, say it's a group of us, a gang, here and you got the two bosses... something like that. I didn't personally know them but the way that they conducted themselves and the respect that they had and things like that, and the girls that they had... all the desires I had on the street and also with my peers- they had it... They would also encourage me and try to motivate me in ways saying things like 'you strong' or 'I see that you...' they liked that I was quiet but could follow orders quickly. If I was told to do something it would be done in 1-2-3. They would like that. But the thing was the money the girls all things that they had all the desires that I wanted that I didn't have at that point, that's what made them a role model in my eyes, to me at that point.

Zion described his distrust of men as a challenge to his ability to identify with a male mentor:

My inability to look past masculinity sometimes. I think that I have a serious distrust of men. It can start with that. I think I always see I struggle with masculinity. It something I always going to go back and forth about and sometimes I appreciate and sometimes I didn't. Most times I just hate it. That always keeps me away from a lot of men and I guess the men that could be good influences but I don't really interact with men of color on a mentor/mentee type of way.

Outcome

The emerging themes gleaned from the interviews centered on the following: (1) college is the only option; (2) recognize the standard and challenge it; (3) street credibility; (4) covering and (5) emulate from afar. In completion of this analysis, the researcher has utilized the analytical framework used by Dancy (2007).

The experiences of the five primary participants were varied and substantial. Many of the participants described shared experiences of being Black male collegians. Each participant exhibited an earnest desire to be academically successful despite their family and neighborhood background.

Surprisingly, some of the participants felt that their communication and interaction with their neighborhood, however negative was acceptable and did not negatively impact their ability to succeed. In other words, whether, they could simultaneously occupy the space of “scholar” and “street thug” without having to choose one or the other. However, other participants indicated that their quest for academic success required them to give up on negative neighborhood friendships.

Family relationships were essential to each participant’s idea of success, particularly academic and financial. All the primary participants indicated the importance of family to their overall goals, but they also indicated receiving conflicting messages. While many family members did their best to assist them along their academic journey, some participants identified counterproductive messages from their family. “Sometimes you can be too smart for your own good,” stated Zion’s family member #1. In this instance the family member made reference to a situation Zion had with his family upon his matriculation to Rutgers-Newark. Zion family member#1 in their statement made reference to the fact that they believed Zion was “too good” for them. In this reference,

the family member alluded to the fact that they felt Zion talked different and hung out with different people than he used when he was living at home.

Black male collegians adjust to their environment to fit in. Sometimes that is perceived as a slight to not just their neighborhood friends, but to family as well. When Zion was asked by the researcher whether he has to hide his academic achievements at home, this was his response:

Not here, not in Newark. I never have to, but when I go home I have to. I can't talk about it without seeming like I'm bragging and I'm not always bragging, sometimes I can't even speak because I feel out of ... I would never speak on it when I'm back at home because I know they are not going to understand where I'm coming from. So it's a wasted breath at that point. But out here people, well people on campus they understand a little bit more because people have been exposed a little bit more, in terms of academia. But back at home most people haven't so...

As such, many of the participants sought guidance through peers for direction. In some cases, participants sought the example of a mentor, but not in a formal conversation.

Mustafa's mentor (Administrator # 1) states, "if Mustafa hadn't come to my office due to a few misunderstandings he had with faculty, I don't think our paths would have crossed.

The mandate from the University is demanding. Mentorship to undergraduates is not something I can put on my resume." Mustafa's mentor (Administrator # 1) emphasized that he doesn't regret mentoring him, but makes the point that his ability to do so is rare and limited.

This research cannot definitively identify all, or even most of the variables related to academic success of Black male collegians at an urban university, but for the cases used in this study the researcher can glean some prominent concepts that may be able to inform the academic success of other African American male undergraduates of similar profiles. In the next chapter, I will discuss the major findings in relation to the established literature and future research implications.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I will discuss the conclusions and implications for future research in the study of academic achievement amongst Black male collegians at an urban university. This chapter will include the purpose of this dissertation research, an overview of the qualitative findings and, finally, the implications for future research.

This chapter reports information from the face-to-face, semi-structured interviews that I conducted with five Black Male collegians (primary participants) and their family, peers, mentors and faculty/administrators (secondary participants) over three academic semesters. All five cases used in this study were matriculated undergraduate students at Rutgers-University, Newark at the time of this study. Interviews of the primary participants took place on the Rutgers-Newark campus. Secondary participant's (family, peers, mentors and faculty/administrators) interviews took place in varied locations and via phone.

A number of scholars have identified variables affecting matriculation and retention rates i.e. socio-economic status (SES), family background, social, cultural and academic integration on campus, campus environment (urban vs. suburban), age and employment status (Harper, 2006; Harris & Harper, 2008; Strayhorn, 2010; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 2005).

The aforementioned studies have identified the stated variables as influencing, however tangentially, achievement and persistence of Black males in the areas of matriculation, persistence and grade point averages, but few studies have investigated Black male identity construction in relation to academic outcomes in higher education (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Deering, 2004).

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this dissertation research was to understand the impact male identity has on academic engagement amongst Black male collegians at an urban university. This dissertation research utilized five Black male archetypes (conformist, retreatist, rebel, innovator and hedonist) formulated by Sewell (1997). Using Sewell's (1997) study of Black male students, five male identities emerged conformist, innovator, retreatist, rebel and hedonist. This dissertation is a case study that investigates the impact of the male identities amongst five Black male collegians and their academic outcomes at Rutgers-Newark. The study provided insight into the nexus between male identity and academic outcomes.

The first part of the dissertation described the problem of Black male collegian matriculation, persistence and graduation from college campuses around the country. The second part of the dissertation consisted of identifying and interviewing five primary participants from Rutgers-Newark. The five participants then named secondary

participants (family, peers, faculty or administrators and a mentor) to be interviewed by the researcher. The researcher sought to triangulate the data by utilizing responses from the secondary participants identified by each primary participant. The dissertation research addressed the gap in the literature by giving voice to each primary participant and soliciting further information from key informants identified as secondary participants.

Research Questions

1. In what ways, does male identity formation amongst Black male collegians influence academic engagement?
2. How is Black male identity constructed and operationalized among matriculated undergraduate students at Rutgers- Newark?

The results were varied and substantial in this dissertation study. Gender and race does influence academic engagement for Black male collegians in higher education. Before the results are further discussed, it is important to identify the limitations associated with this doctoral dissertation study.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

The researcher has identified the following as limitations to this dissertation study. First, the site for this study was limited to only one urban university. Due to the complex nature of the research topic, including additional urban universities might have provided

additional information not included in the data collected. Additional sites might have yielded additional cases or cases better aligned to the typologies identified by Sewell (1997).

Second, cases used for this dissertation research were identified via referral. Though referrals have been instrumental in the completion of this research project, several Black male collegians have been excluded from the study due to not being referred.

Third, the researcher was unable to interview all of the intended secondary participants of some of the primary participants. One primary participant refused to identify family members for the researcher to interview due to his belief they would not take the interviews seriously, because of race. The primary participant in the aforementioned example believed that because the researcher was Black his family members would not accept the legitimacy of the researcher and therefore neglect to respond to the researcher's requests for an interview. Two other primary cases were unable to identify mentors for the researcher to interview.

Fourth, maintaining separation between the experiences of the primary cases and those of the researcher was imperative. The researcher is male and identifies as Black. As such, the researcher was diligent in maintaining separation between his collegiate experiences and those used in the study. Though the researcher made every effort to maintain distance between experiences, the possibility of transference exists.

Finally, this study utilized an open definition of race and gender. Primary participants were required to only self-identify as male and Black or African American. The definition of gender and race are complex and varied, as such, this study took a very liberal approach to the two terms versus a strict one. If the researcher utilized a strict definition of race and gender there may have been a different set of primary participants and results.

SUMMARY OF STUDY

All primary study participants self-identified as Black and male. Primary participants ranged in ages 20-24. There were not grade point average (GPA) requirements for this study; however participants self-reported GPA's ranging from 2.8 to 3.4. The participants used in this dissertation study were comprised of four upper-class students and the remaining participant had less than two years in college. The academic majors for the study participants included social work, criminal justice, nursing, psychology and public service. Only one study participant self-reported membership in the Honors College at Rutgers-Newark. Four of the study participants are from New Jersey. Majority are from urban communities in New Jersey, with one self-reporting at the time of the study living in a middle-class suburban community. One participant is from a suburban neighborhood in a Southern state on the east coast.

Primary participants completed a pre-participant screening questionnaire (see Appendix D) created by the researcher to determine their eligibility for the study. There were approximately 31 students who were referred for the study. Out of the 31 students that were referred, approximately 28 students completed the pre-participant screening questionnaire. The typology questionnaire (see Appendix E and Appendix F) consisted of 30 questions created from the definitions of each typology (conformist, retreatist, innovator, rebel and hedonist). Pre-participants responded to the questions on the questionnaire using a five option Likert scale. The questions were reviewed and approved by two members of dissertation committee for relevance and validity. The questions on the questionnaire were randomized on the document and not easily identifiable by the pre-participant. All 28 students who completed the pre-participant questionnaire completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher. The pre-participant questionnaire took about 10 minutes for each student to complete. The typology questionnaire responses helped the researcher determine compatibility with the proposed study. The typology questionnaire was used to determine a participant's compatibility with one of the identified educational male archetypes (conformist, retreatist, innovator, rebel and hedonist). Only one questionnaire was completed per potential participant for the researcher to determine their eligibility. The researcher made the final determination as to which potential participants were chosen and utilized for this study.

DISCUSSION

A significant body of literature exists that explores Black male collegians academic outcomes in regards to graduation, persistence, attrition, financial aid, mentorship, academic preparedness, campus involvement, social supports, academic supports (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Harper, 2004, 2006c, 2009, 2010; Hood, 1992; Lewis et al., 2010). For example, Harper in his study on the nation's 50 flagship schools found that Black males accounted for less than three percent of enrollment (2006c). Harper made a number of recommendations to institutions to help increase not only enrollment but graduation rates, too. Harper (2006c) advocated more mentorship by faculty and matriculated Black male students. He also found that students that were more integrated into the leadership and extracurricular activities of the school had better academic outcomes (Harper, 2006c).

The theoretical scholarship on male identity and the variables associated with academic achievement (i.e. Archer & Yamashita, 2003; Connell, 1996, Connolly, 1995; Dalley-Trim, 2007; Hunter & Davis, 1992; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Pascoe, 2003; Vinto, 1993) is extensive, but not exhaustive. The theoretical research on Black males and academic achievement, in particular, is also extensive (i.e. Akom, 2003; Davis, 2003; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Majors & Billson, 1993; Noguera, 2003; Parham & McDavis, 1987; Staples, 1982). However, empirical research relative to male identity construction amongst Black male collegians is scant. A number of studies have investigated academic

achievement among middle and high school Black male students internationally (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Parry, 1996a, 1996b; Sewell, 1997; Wright et al. 1998). Domestically, empirical studies have taken place in large part at the middle, elementary and secondary levels (Addison & Westmoreland, 1999; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Davis & Martin, 2008; Foster, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Strayhorn 2009). However, qualitative research on the impact of male identity construction amongst Black male collegians exists, but is limited (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Deering, 2004).

A number of variables have been identified as possible factors effecting matriculation and retention rates, i.e. socio-economic status (SES), family background, social, cultural and academic integration on campus, campus environment (urban vs. suburban), age and employment status (Harper, 2006; Harris & Harper, 2008; Strayhorn, 2010; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 2005). The aforementioned studies have identified the stated variables as impacting, however tangentially, achievement and persistence of Black males in the areas of matriculation, persistence and grade point averages, but few studies have investigated Black male identity construction in relation to academic outcomes in higher education (Dancy, 2007; Davis, 1994; Deering, 2004).

This study directly addresses the gap in the literature by focusing on the five typologies that emerged in Sewell's (1997) seminal study. This research project identified the following emerging themes: (1) college is the only option; (2) recognize the standard and challenge it; (3) street credibility; (4) covering and (5) emulate from afar.

College is the Only Option

Each case indicated in their own words the importance of education and their desire to be financially and professionally successful. Zion, John and Luke indicated that they were all first generation college students. All three participants stressed the desire to break the cycle within their families of academic un-success. Mustafa and Josh indicated their desire to continue the family tradition of obtaining a college degree. All five cases relayed an internal fortitude to persevere despite personal or academic short comings. They all demonstrated a “can do” attitude regardless of the circumstances that might prevent them from graduating.

Further, all but one, Josh, was raised in low-income, urban communities. As such, they stressed the desire to change their circumstances through education. Though not explicitly articulated, education became for them “the great equalizer.” Even for Josh, education offered the opportunity to become professionally successful in a world that often times refused to recognize Black male humanity.

All the cases indicated their desire to help not just themselves, but family and friends. College provides them the means to that. Though some of the cases had grade point averages below a 3.0, they believed that their perseverance and termination towards completion offers them much more opportunities than the alternative.

Recognize the Standard and Challenge It

It's not enough to just go to class and complete assignments. As Black male collegians it was imperative that they went above and beyond the status quo. Several participants described the need to show the professor or administrator their commitment to the course by deliberately demonstrating that they had read or were prepared for examinations or other assignments.

Black male collegians, based on the perspectives of the participants in this study must strive to go above and beyond the minimum required in classes. Race and gender make it a necessity. Whether real or imagined all five cases provided numerous examples of having to supersede the minimum expectations set for other students. The appearance alone of the Black male collegian warrants a disruption of the norm. Mustafa emphasizes the point:

...I'm the only one that looks like me. I mean in my class. The way the nursing program works everybody is always together. So if I have three nursing classes I would be with those same people throughout all three classes for the whole semester. When I'm with those people none of them look like me. Maybe the girls, but women are just different. I do feel isolated because it seems like some things are just misunderstood. Things are not taken the way I intend things to be taken. So that may create some issues. I remember in the clinical setting since I'm a nursing major I had a few incidents with how I am perceived by my faculty. I don't recall other students having to deal with those type of things. I don't want to immediately say it is a racial thing but it could be the fact that I'm male...

Street Credibility

Majors and Billson (1993) in their research describe the “cool pose” assumed by Black men in various settings. In this dissertation study, the concept emerged as street credibility. I found two primary participants (Luke and Mustafa) oscillate between their identities of a ‘scholar’ versus ‘street thug.’ The oscillation between the two identities manifested themselves as internal struggles. Both participants made deliberate statements about their internal conflict between the Black male they want to be versus the one they believe others expected of them. At times, those expectations seemed to shift based on the person they are interacting with at the time. Luke reveals:

I see myself having more confidence in my environment on the streets. I feel as if because of my experiences through college and, I feel there is a different standard between me and another individual on the streets and so because of the knowledge that I have much more of higher, I don't want to say power, I don't want to use that choice, but it's like I just have a better understanding of life and how to get by in society. I have more knowledge of where to go and how to get things done versus you who may be limited and don't have that expansion in knowledge and expansion in how to get by in society, I don't know....I feel comfortable in both, I feel confident in both to tell you the truth. However, I do feel a little tense in the college setting where I feel as I am surrounded by people who I'm not normally adjusted to interacting with socially so on so forth. In this environment, I know as long as I'm sitting in this classroom and I show the teacher I'm paying attention and I engage a little bit and just study I'll be able to pass...

The desire to fully integrate oneself to the university campus was not a priority for the primary participants. Attending classes, meeting new people, maintaining work-study

jobs and, even, completing a study-abroad program was not the focus of the participants for engagement to the university campus. The literature is clear, students who are more involved in college programs both academic and otherwise are more likely to have better academic outcomes (Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2006b, 2006c, 2012; Lee and Ransom, 2011). All of the participants are involved in some activity other than just class, but for at least two participants the allegiance to the “streets” is still strong. The depth of involvement in campus activities makes a difference for Black male collegians (Harper, 2012). The final case utilized in this dissertation study, Josh, was involved in sports, work-study and is a member of the Honors College. His interview yielded no allegiance to the “street.” It is important to note that Josh indicated that he was raised in a suburban neighborhood and his friends from his community, for the most part, attended a four year institution.

Covering

Dubois wrote, “it is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (1903, p. 2). Black males on college campuses are not immune from the racial prejudices that exist in general society. All of the participants admitted that their race and gender constantly reminded them of their position not just on campus, but also in society. Though none of the participants spoke of specific instances of discrimination or racism, they all did feel their race and gender caused atypical interactions with faculty, administrators and students. Mustafa has coined

these interactions as ‘misunderstandings.’ He states, “It depends on the faculty member. Most faculty member that I dealt with, I don’t recall having problems with. Of course there are some that I have had problems with. As far as how they receive me. I don’t think anyone overall has a bad impression of me. I think there are certain misunderstandings, maybe.”

Participants were influenced not just by general society, but also through family, friends and faculty/administrators. Collegial expectations were not only determined by faculty and administrators, but in some instances, by family. “Sometimes you can be too smart for your own good,” stated Zion’s family member #1. In this instance the family member made reference to a situation Zion had with his family upon his matriculation to Rutgers-Newark. Zion family member#1 in their statement made reference to the fact that they believed Zion was “too good” for them. In this reference, the family members alluded to the fact that they felt Zion talked different and hung out with different people than he used when he was living at home. Black male collegians adjust to their environment to fit in. Sometimes that is perceived as a slight to not just their neighborhood friends, but to family as well. When Zion was asked by the researcher whether he has to hide his academic achievements at home, this was his response:

Not here, not in Newark. I never have to, but when I go home I have to. I can’t talk about it without seeming like I’m bragging and I’m not always bragging, sometimes I can’t even speak because I feel out of ... I would never speak on it when I’m back at home because I know they are not going to understand where I’m coming from. So it’s a wasted breath at that point. But out here people, well people on campus they understand a little bit more

because people have been exposed a little bit more, in terms of academia. But back at home most people haven't so...

Emulate from Afar

Mentors help Black males fulfill their potential (Whiting, 2006). However, too many Black males lack positive male role models that help guide and direct them (Harper, 2006c and Strayhorn, 2010). All the participants for this study have indicated that they would like a role model to help them through their academic process. However, only two indicated that they could identify someone who fulfilled that role. Interestingly enough, they first introduced each role model as someone they watched from afar. The Black male collegians used in this study were not blind to need for role models, but, rather it seems were limited in their interaction with those who would be able serve as role models. The literature is clear on the challenges Black male collegians face, but what about the challenges of Black male faculty and administrators?

Harper (2006a-c, 2012) found that Black male faculty and administrators would aid in the academic integration of Black male collegians. It is important to note that both the mentors identified by John and Mustafa are African American. However, Harper identified a number of challenges to universities hiring and retaining Black male faculty and administrators (2006a-c). One of the key findings from Harper's research was the job responsibilities. Many new Black male faculty and administrators have job

responsibilities such as teaching and research both of which require time. “There is just not enough time in the day to do both,” states Mustafa’s mentor. He goes on to say, “if Mustafa hadn’t come to my office due to a few misunderstandings he had with faculty, I don’t think our paths would have crossed. The mandate from the University is demanding. Mentorship to undergraduates is not something I can put on my resume.” Mustafa’s mentor emphasized that he doesn’t regret mentoring him, but makes the point that his ability to do so is rare and limited.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study has four intended audiences. The first intended audience of this study is the Black male collegian. The matriculation and persistence rates of Black males at Rutgers-Newark are alarmingly low. Arguably, the most important factor to help turn the tide of low Black male enrollment and persistence towards graduation at Rutgers-Newark is going to be Black male collegians themselves. Some Black male collegians, upon reading this dissertation, may discover they are actively ascribing to behavior(s) which may, unintentionally, be leading them to demonstrate poor educational outcomes. Further, this dissertation may also illuminate social cultural norms that some Black males collegians hold as important which conflict with their ability to academically integrate into the University environment. The literature on the topic overwhelmingly suggests that family plays a vital role in Black male achievement in college (Dixon, 1999; Strayhorn, 2008c).

Thus, the second intended audience is the family of Black male collegians. The family is often thought to be the first institution that socializes a child. As a result, the family of Black male collegians can better understand the role they play in helping to prepare their student for college achievement and persistence. The study will provide critical information to families better distinguish between male identities that are worth nurturing or curbing in their student. Further, families will learn how best to support their student while matriculated in his undergraduate program of study.

Third, academics can use the current study to identify the impact the five typologies have on Black male collegians that may have similar circumstances as those who participated in the study. Though the study takes place at Rutgers-Newark, scholars can use the present study's findings to identify the possible implications for other groups. Due to the fact that the current study is research on Black male identity construction at an urban public university, scholars may want to explore the implications in different environmental settings or college campuses i.e. rural, suburban, public, private or ivy league. This study will be helpful for scholars who are interested in developing effective educational practices when addressing educational outcomes of Black males.

The final audience this study holds significance for are Rutgers- Newark administrators. Tinto, (1982), Harper (2006a, 2006b, 2006c) and Strayhorn (2010) have all indicated in their studies that student-faculty relationships make a difference in collegiate persistence.

University administrators, as a result of this study, may want to revisit faculty responsibilities. Thus, new programs may need to be created to help foster more social and academic integration on campus. In addition, the admissions office administration can review this study in evaluating admission requirements.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on a number of limitations noted above, further research on the influence of gender and race are needed. First, the creation of an instrument that can be administered to a greater sample size might help to gain a better understanding of the extent to which race and gender influence academic engagement. Qualitative research is important and helps give voice to many of the intangible variables associated with quantitative research. However, qualitative research is time consuming and can become extremely costly when researching larger sample sizes. An instrument that measures male identity and academic engagement could be administered to large groups over more campuses. A few instruments exist that measure campus engagement, but they fall short in taking into account race and gender. The field of urban education and higher education would benefit from such a tool especially in light of the population that makes up many urban institutions and academic outcomes associated with such campuses.

Second, further research on the influence of role models for Black male collegians is needed. Only two participants indicated having a semi-formal role model relationship established. The literature has been clear on the point; Black male college students need mentors (Bonner, 1997; Dancy, 2007; Harper, 2012). Mentors provide guidance not just academically, but also professionally. The two participants who indicated they had mentors made reference to them many times throughout the interviews and indicated that the mentors help establish a deeper connection to the university campus. The creation of a formalized mentorship program among Black male collegians and faculty or administrators may yield results important to not just the student but the institution as a whole.

Finally, the time frame for this study was limited. A longitudinal study that follows Black male collegians from matriculation to graduation might offer interesting findings in the evolution of male identity and its influence on academic engagement. A longitudinal study would be able to track the evolution of each Black male collegian in the study over time. The study would then be able to take into account other variables that may be impacting academic engagement in conjunction with male identity.

All of the aforementioned implications would be able to assist in formulating policy for urban universities and other institutions seeking to improve academic outcomes for Black males. The implications are not limited to just universities, but might be useful in K-12 grades as well. The five primary participants used in this study are products of not just

their family and friends, but the institutions that previously attended as well. University campuses offer only one voice in a community composed of others. According to an African proverb, “it [truly] takes a village to raise a child.”

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT DATA SHEET

Name: _____ Age: _____

Email: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Gender: _____ Race: _____

Nationality: _____

Are you an undergraduate Rutgers- Newark student? Yes ☐ No ☐

Where do you live? ☐ on campus ☐ off campus
 _____ (city/state)

Can you identify at least **two** Rutgers-Newark faculty members who you would be comfortable with me interviewing regarding your academic performance in class? Yes ☐ No ☐

Can you identify at least **two** family members that you would be comfortable with me interviewing who contributed significantly to your development of what it means to be a man?
 Yes ☐ No ☐

Can you identify at least **two** of your friends who you would be comfortable with me interviewing who know you in both academic and non-academic settings? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have at least **one** mentor? If so, would you be comfortable with me interviewing them for this study? Yes ☐ No ☐

Current Academic Standing:

Year in School @ Rutgers-Newark

☐ Freshman Major: _____

☐ Sophomore Minor: _____

☐ Junior

☐ Senior

Are you involved in any sports, clubs, fraternities, honor societies etc. on campus? If so, please list them: _____

Current Rutgers GPA: _____ / 4.00

Are you enrolled in the Honors College? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you currently or have been enrolled in any honors classes? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many hours a week do you study? _____

Academic History:

High School GPA: _____ / 4.00

Have you taken any AP classes in high school? Yes ☐ No ☐

Were you involved in any sports, clubs, fraternities, honor societies etc. in high school? If so, please list them: _____

Degree/ Career Aspirations

Briefly describe your career plans after graduation: _____

Household/ Family Info:

☐ Two Parent Household

☐ Single-Parent Household (Mother)

☐ Single-Parent Household (Father)

☐ Guardian (Kinship: i.e. grandparents/ Non-Kinship: i.e. foster care)

☐ Other _____

Highest Educational Level obtained by primary caregiver(s), if applicable: List title of caregiver next to level.

☐ Below High school _____

☐ High school _____

☐ Two-year College _____

☐ Four-year College _____

☐ Graduate or Professional School _____

Estimate your yearly parent/ individual income:

☐ Below \$29,999

☐ \$30,000- \$59,999

☐ \$60,000-\$89,999

☐ \$90,000+

APPENDIX B

CONSENT I [Primary Participant]

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jermaine Monk, a doctoral candidate, in the Urban Systems Department at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to understand how Black male identity is constructed and performed amongst male collegians at Rutgers-Newark and the possible impact it has on their academic outcomes.

Participants between the ages of 18 and 25 years old are asked to participate in this study. Interviews will be done in private, face-to-face and last approximately 2 hours.

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be assigned a pseudonym that will be affixed to the transcribed interview. Your name will not appear anywhere in the interview notes or listed in the completed dissertation. There will be no public link between you or your responses. Therefore, data collection is confidential.

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. While your academic performance will not likely be affected by your participation in this study, the study may produce valuable data concerning the relationship between male identity and academic outcomes. You will receive no compensation for your participation in this study.

Participation in this study is wholly voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the course of the study without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

This research is confidential. Confidential means that your name will be recorded, but no other identifying information about you will be collected. I will not record your name outside of this form and pre-participant questionnaire.

Do you agree to be audio recorded for this study? _____ (initial). You are still eligible to participate in the study even if you do not consent to be audio recorded.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Jermaine Monk at (347) 577-4036. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 848 932 4058
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.
Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

CONSENT II [RU FACULTY or ADMINISTRATOR]

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jermaine Monk, a doctoral candidate, in the Urban Systems Department at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to understand how Black male identity is constructed and performed amongst male collegians at Rutgers-Newark and the possible impact it has on their academic outcomes.

Approximately five subjects have been identified. Due to your relationship to one of the participants (your student), you have been solicited to provide insight as to your student's male identity development and performance. Further, your insight may help the researcher better understand the ways your student's male identity affects their academic outcomes. Interviews will be done in private, face-to-face and last approximately 2 hours.

Note: Researcher has obtained written consent giving you permission to speak to me about his performance in your class(es). Please refer to email forwarded and signed consent form provided. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be assigned a pseudonym that will be affixed to the transcribed interview. Your name will not appear anywhere in the interview notes or listed in the completed dissertation. Every effort will be made to protect your identity. Therefore, data collection is confidential.

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this study. Your insight on the indicated participant may produce valuable data concerning the relationship between male identity and academic outcomes. There is no compensation for your participation in this study. Participation in this study is wholly voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the course of the study without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

Confidential means that your name will be recorded, but no other identifying information about you will be collected. Do you agree to be audio recorded for this study? _____ (initial).

You are still eligible to participate in the study even if you do not consent to be audio recorded.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Jermaine Monk at (347) 577-4036. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

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Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza

New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559

Tel: 848 932 4058

Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

CONSENT III [FAMILY]

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jermaine Monk, a doctoral candidate, in the Urban Systems Department at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to understand how Black male identity is constructed and performed amongst male collegians at Rutgers-Newark and the possible impact it has on their academic outcomes.

Approximately five subjects have been identified. Due to your relationship to one of the participants (your student), you have been solicited to provide insight as to your student's male identity development and performance. Further, your insight may help the researcher better understand the ways your student's male identity affects their academic outcomes. Interviews will be done in private, face-to-face and last approximately 2 hours.

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be assigned a pseudonym that will be affixed to the transcribed interview. Your name will not appear anywhere in the interview notes or listed in the completed dissertation. Every effort will be made to protect your identity. Therefore, data collection is confidential.

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this study. Your insight on the indicated participant may produce valuable data concerning the relationship between male identity and academic outcomes. There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

Participation in this study is wholly voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the course of the study without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

Confidential means that your name will be recorded, but no other identifying information about you will be collected.

Do you agree to be audio recorded for this study? _____ (initial). You are still eligible to participate in the study even if you do not consent to be audio recorded.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Jermaine Monk at (347) 577-4036. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559

Tel: 848 932 4058

Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

CONSENT IV [PEERS]

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jermaine Monk, a doctoral candidate, in the Urban Systems Department at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to understand how Black male identity is constructed and performed amongst male collegians at Rutgers-Newark and the possible impact it has on their academic outcomes.

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Subject _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

CONSENT V [MENTOR]

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jermaine Monk, a doctoral candidate, in the Urban Systems Department at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to understand how Black male identity is constructed and performed amongst male collegians at Rutgers-Newark and the possible impact it has on their academic outcomes.

Approximately five subjects have been identified. Due to your relationship to one of the participants (your student), you have been solicited to provide insight as to your student's male identity development and performance. Further, your insight may help the researcher better understand the ways your student's male identity affects their academic outcomes. Interviews will be done in private, face-to-face and last approximately 2 hours.

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be assigned a pseudonym that will be affixed to the transcribed interview. Your name will not appear anywhere in the interview notes or listed in the completed dissertation. Every effort will be made to protect your identity. Therefore, data collection is confidential.

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this study. Your insight on the indicated participant may produce valuable data concerning the relationship between male identity and academic outcomes. There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

Participation in this study is wholly voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the course of the study without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

Confidential means that your name will be recorded, but no other identifying information about you will be collected.

Do you agree to be audio recorded for this study? _____ (initial). You are still eligible to participate in the study even if you do not consent to be audio recorded.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Jermaine Monk at (347) 577-4036. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

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You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

CONSENT FORM (STUDENT TO FACULTY)

I _____ give Jermaine Monk, primary investigator, for the dissertation study entitled: *Male Identity and Academic Engagement: Case Studies of Black Male Collegians at an Urban University* to interview _____, faculty member/ administrator at Rutgers University.

I permit the primary investigator to ask questions regarding my performance in class(es) at Rutgers University and to use that information as part of the dissertation study.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date

Title

Address

Salutation:

Greetings! This letter is written in response to our conversation on [DATE]. I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation in assisting with me with my doctoral dissertation research.

The title of my dissertation is *Male Identity and Academic Engagement: Case Studies of Black Male Collegians at an Urban University*. I have chosen Rutgers University, Newark as the institution to recruit my participants. The purpose of this research is to understand how male identity is constructed among the five participants and the impact it has on their academic outcomes.

I need your assistance in identifying two to three African American male undergraduates between the ages of 18-25. I will interview and select one or more of these students to participate in this study. My study is qualitative in nature and will require me to spend time interviewing the student. Participants identified will also be asked to identify faculty, family, peers and a mentor for me to interview so I can better understand the ways their male identity and academic outcomes came to be. All participants will be kept confidential. Participants will be provided a copy of the dissertation upon completion of the study.

Qualitative research of this nature is scant, thus this study will add to the discourse on Black male achievement in higher education. I value your cooperation and thank you in advance for your commitment and energy in this recruitment effort. Without your assistance this study would not be possible. You may contact me at (973) 861-3829 (C) or (347) 577-4036 (W).

Respectfully,

Jermaine J. Monk

Where do you live? ☐ on campus ☐ off campus
(city/state)

Can you identify **at least two** Rutgers-Newark faculty members who you would be comfortable with me interviewing regarding your academic performance in class? Yes ☐ No ☐

Can you identify **at least two** of your friends who you would be comfortable with me interviewing who know you in **both** academic and non-academic settings? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have **at least one** mentor? If so, would you be comfortable with me interviewing them for this study? Yes ☐ No ☒

APPENDIX E

TYPOLOGY PRE-PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
Question						
1	I believe education benefits all racial and cultural groups in society.					
2	I feel faculty, staff and/ or students in my college are racist.					
3	I care what my friends think about me.					
4	I take a lot of pictures of myself and post them to social media sites throughout the day.					
5	It's hard to act the same way in class as I do with my friends.					
6	College is pointless.					
7	I am constantly negatively labeled on campus because of my race and gender.					
8	I should be able to speak slang when talking to faculty and staff.					
9	I try to avoid being on campus as much as possible.					
10	I believe I can be educated without going to college.					
11	It seems White males have an easier time in college than I do.					
12	Clothes and music make me who I am.					
13	I change how I talk, walk and behave to satisfy my professors.					
14	College is too hard.					
15	The best part about college is the parties!					
16	Speaking standard English is essential to academic success.					
17	I feel like some of my troubles with housing and academics are because of my race and gender.					
18	It's hard to focus on school work because I'd rather 'chill' with friends.					
19	I don't feel respected by administrators,					

	faculty and staff because of my race and gender.					
20	I believe education is the best way to become financially successful.					
21	I utilize the writing center, LRC or attend faculty office hours to work towards getting a higher grade.					
22	I've thought about withdrawing because school is "just not for me."					
23	I am complimented often on campus by classmates, faculty and staff about my appearance.					
24	There is no real point to college; I am just here to get a job.					
25	I often feel many of my professors don't expect much from me academically because I am a Black male.					
26	I often question why I have to go to college at all.					
27	I often use Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Vine while in class.					
28	Attending college was one of the best decisions I've ever made.					
29	I would enjoy college more without professors.					
30	I am a 'trend setter.'					

APPENDIX F

CHART OF TYPOLOGY QUESTIONNAIRE

Typology	Questionnaire Questions
Conformist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I believe education benefits all racial and cultural groups in society. 2. I change how I talk, walk and behave to satisfy my professors. 3. Speaking standard English is essential to academic success. 4. I believe education is the best way to become financially successful. 5. I utilize the writing center, LRC or attend faculty office hours to work towards getting a higher grade. 6. Attending college was one of the best decisions I've ever made.
Innovator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I care what my friends think about me. 2. It's hard to act the same way in class as I do with my friends. 3. I should be able to speak slang when talking to faculty and staff. 4. I believe I can be educated without going to college. 5. It's hard to focus on school work because I'd rather 'chill' with friends. 6. I would enjoy college more without professors.
Retreatist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. College is pointless. 2. I try to avoid being on campus as much as possible. 3. College is too hard. 4. I've thought about withdrawing because school is "just not for me." 5. There is no real point to college; I am just here to get a job. 6. I often question why I have to go to college at all.
Rebel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel faculty, staff and/ or students in my college are racist. 2. I am constantly negatively labeled on campus because of my race and gender.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. It seems White males have an easier time in college than I do. 4. I feel like some of my troubles with housing and academics are because of my race and gender. 5. I often feel many of my professors don't expect much from me academically because I am a Black male. 6. I don't feel respected by administrators, faculty and staff because of my race and gender.
Hedonist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I take a lot of pictures of myself and post them to social media sites throughout the day. 2. Clothes and music make me who I am. 3. The best part about college is the parties! 4. I am complimented often on campus by classmates, faculty and staff about my appearance. 5. I often use Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Vine while in class. 6. I am a 'trend setter.'

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (STUDENTS)

Pre-College Information

1. Tell me a little bit about your academic journey leading up to you entering Rutgers-Newark.
2. Why did you choose Rutgers-Newark? Who or what influenced you to come to Rutgers-Newark as opposed to another institution?
3. Think about your family and high school friends. What are they doing these days? What do they say about your enrollment in college?
4. When did you concisely identify as Black or African American? When did you purposely identify as a man? Are the two identities combined for you? In other words are you a Black person who is a man? Or a man who happens to be Black?

Collegiate Environment

5. Tell me about what it's like for you getting used to life as a student at Rutgers-Newark. [I will prompt for positive and negative aspects]
6. What did you expect coming here? Is that different than what you found once you got here? [I will focus on experiences, students and faculty, if student doesn't]
7. Who or what is important to you while you attend Rutgers-Newark? Why? [I will prompt for people inside and outside the institution]
8. What would you say are the most advantageous kinds of experiences you've had since enrolling at Rutgers-Newark? Experiences both on and off campus.

9. Do you feel comfortable at Rutgers-Newark? Describe.
10. Do you feel valued by the University? Why or why not? Are there others you feel are More valued than you? In what ways?
11. Are you involved in any clubs, organizations or on sports teams? If so, what lead you to those organizations? Have those experiences been positive or negative for you? Please describe.
12. Have you ever thought about withdrawing or dropping out of Rutgers-Newark? If so, why?
13. Think about the faculty and staff at the University you know. How did you meet them?

Collegiate Male Identity Questions

14. Think about your family and friends. Who would you say influenced you the most Regarding your identity as a male?
15. Think about your K-12 years. Which Black boys (attributes/characteristics) were Most recognized by teachers and staff? What about by fellow students? Are there any similarities or differences to those recognized in college?
16. What does the phrase, "be a man" mean to you?
17. If I changed the phrase to be a "Black man," does the meaning change? If so, in what ways?
18. If you could take a pill or injection to make you anything other than "Black" or "male," would you take it? Why or why not?
19. Imagine that you are attending an academic social event at the university where you

are one of many Black men. If all of the Black men behaved differently from you (i.e. "nerds," "bougie," "thuggish," "ghetto"), in what ways, if at all, would you change your behavior to fit in? Explain your answer.

20. Would you ever change your behavior to meet the expectations of others? If so, how would you go about doing so?

21. What would faculty and staff say about you on campus?

22. What would your college friends say about you?

23. How would you describe the dispositions and character traits of your friends from either neighborhood or campus?

24. Do you have a sense if you are similar to or different from other Black men on campus? Explain.

25. Have you ever tried to hide your educational achievement aspirations to "fit in" with a group of Black men (on or off campus). Why or why not?

26. Has your understanding and performance of your male identity changed since you matriculated at Rutgers-Newark?

27. What are your plans after graduation? Who, if anyone, has influenced those decisions?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (FAMILY)

Male Identity

1. When you hear the term be a 'man' what images come to mind?
2. Is there a difference between "be a man" and "be a Black man?" If so, please describe.
3. In what ways have you taught your student to be a 'man' or a 'Black man'?
4. Have there been consequences (either from you or society) for your student if he didn't adhere to those expectations of manhood?
5. Overall, how would you characterize the male identity of your student?
6. Do you think the 'male behaviors' of your student are positive or negative? In what ways?
7. Is your student's college education necessary to his male identity? Namely, his education enhance or dilute his male identity?

Academic Performance

1. Were you a part of your student's decision to go to Rutgers-Newark? If so, what role did you play? If not, why not?
2. Does your student talk about their classes, assignments, professors, organizations or athletic involvement with you? If so, what is that discussion like?
3. Does your student talk about non-academic things with you (i.e. relationships, parties, video games)? If so, what is that discussion like?
4. What are the primary topics you and your student talk about?

5. Have you seen your student study?
6. Has your student talked with you regarding possibly withdrawing or dropping out of school?
8. If your student did drop out of college, would that change your view of him as a man?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (FACULTY)

Academic Performance

1. What course did you teach when you first came in contact with your student?
2. How long have you taught that subject matter?
3. Can you describe your ideal student?
4. How would you describe your student's academic ability?
5. Are you able to identify any behaviors that helped him in your class?
6. Are you able to identify any behaviors that didn't help him in your class?
7. Can you recall if your student ever attended your office hours?
8. Have you had conversations with your student outside of class? Can you recall who initiated contact?
9. If you had to in one word or phrase identify your students' academic performance in your class, what would it be (i.e. 'smart,' 'gifted,' 'lazy,' 'average')?
10. How does your student compare academically to your other college students ability?
11. Can you identify any points during your instruction of your student where you feel their racial or gender identity effected their academic performance?
12. Are there any behaviors you believe the student is lacking that would be necessary for their long-term success?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (PEERS)

Male Identity

1. Are you friends with your student at Rutgers-Newark, outside of Rutgers-Newark or both?
2. When you hear the term be a 'man' what images come to mind?
3. Is there a difference between "be a man" and "be a Black man?" If so, please describe.
4. In what ways have you seen your student to act like a 'man' or a 'Black man'?
5. In your friend circle are there male identities that are more acceptable than others? Please explain.
6. Overall, how would you characterize ('cool,' 'normal,' 'swaggerific') the male identity of your student? Describe in detail.
7. Do you think the 'male behaviors' of your student are positive or negative? In what ways?
8. Have you noticed your student's male identity change based on environment or sense starting at Rutgers-Newark?

Academic Performance

1. Does your student talk about their classes, assignments, professors, organizations or athletic involvement with you? If so, what is that discussion like?
2. Does your student talk about non-academic things with you (i.e. relationships, parties, video games)? If so, what is that discussion like?
3. What are the primary topics you and your student talk about?

4. Have you seen your student study? Have you ever studied with them? What happened during that study session?
5. Has your student talked with you regarding possibly withdrawing or dropping out of school?
6. If your student did drop out of college, would that change your view of him as a man?
7. What has your student indicated they want to do after graduation?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (MENTOR)

Male Identity

1. When you hear the term “be a man” what images come to mind?
2. Is there a difference between “be a man” and “be a Black man?” If so, please describe.
3. In what ways have you taught your student to be a ‘man’ or a ‘Black man?’
4. Have there been consequences (either from you or society) for your student if he didn’t adhere to those expectations of manhood?
5. Overall, how would you characterize the male identity of your student?
6. Do you think the ‘male behaviors’ of your student are positive or negative? In what ways?
7. Is your student’s college education necessary to his male identity? Namely, does his education enhance or dilute his male identity?
8. Can you describe the ways you have mentored your student?
9. Has your student been receptive to your style of mentorship?

Academic Performance

1. Were you apart of your student’s decision to go to Rutgers-Newark? If so, what role did you play? If not, why not?
2. Does your student talk about their classes, assignments, professors, organizations or athletic involvement with you? If so, what is that discussion like?
3. Does your student talk about non-academic things with you (i.e. relationships, parties, video games)? If so, what is that discussion like?

4. What are the primary topics you and your student talk about?
5. Have you seen your student study?
6. Has your student talked with you regarding withdrawing or dropping out of school?
7. If your student did drop out of college, would that change your view of him as a man?
8. What has your student indicated they want to do after graduation?