The “Strong” Black Woman

African American Women and Persistence in Predominantly White Institutions

Zenaida Rosario
Dr. Nichole M. Garcia
Graduate School of Education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Research Question

• How do African American female undergraduates persist from their sophomore to junior year at Predominantly White Institutions?

Background

• There is a steady increase in the enrollment rates of African American women in PWIs; their rates of degree attainment are not consistent. (National Center for Education Statistics 2019)

• Persistence = academic and social integration.

• Research on Black women in higher education is very limited (Winkle-Wagner 2015)

Methodology

Participants

• 20 Self-Identified African American female undergraduates

Recruitment and Setting

• Multicultural center at PWI located in North Jersey; recruitment through surveys

Data Collection and Analysis

• Qualitative Phenomenological Study
• Semi-structured interviews
• Audio record, transcribed, Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality Theory used to interpret the themes in data.

Anticipated Results

Institutional Support

Counter Spaces

Persistence

Faculty and Peer Influence

Discussion

Racial and Gender Microaggressions

Use of a Counter Space

In and out of academic spaces from both peers and faculty

Involvement in Black student organization/ Black Greek organization

Significance

PWIs must create race and gender specific programs geared towards addressing the needs of African American women and educating the community on the existing institutional sexism and racism within the University.

Selected References


Acknowledgements

• I would like to thank the Ronald E. McNair PostBaccalaureate Achievement Program Staff and Dr. Nichole M. Garcia for the constant support throughout my participation in the Institute.
• I want to thank TRiO programs for giving me a home away from home.
• Thank you to the friends and family that supported me as well.