The Impact of Family Involvement on Academic Success in College:
A Comparison of Black Students


By

Brelinda Johnson


A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Education in Assessment, Learning, and Student Success:  Higher
Education Concentration of Education


Middle Tennessee State University
December, 2021


Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Donald Snead, Chair

Dr. Claire Cook

Dr. Robyn Ridgley

Dr. Barbara Turnage

Dr. Vincent Windrow

This dissertation is dedicated to all my loved ones, specifically to my mother (Margaret) and father (Frank). I am so grateful for my mother, father, and brothers (Cantrell and Lee) who encouraged me along the way. My parents taught me the value of education and hard work. Their contribution and high involvement in my educational career guided me toward this path of inquiry to learn more about parental involvement and its relationship to academic success. My family is truly a blessing, and I'm sincerely grateful for the love they consistently provide to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank the only living God, with Christ all things are possible. Next, I would like to thank my amazing mother and father, whose everlasting love has motivated me to become the woman I am today.  I am grateful they instilled such positive values (God, education, and family) into my life. To my brothers, Cantrell and Lee, thank you for always being a listening ear. Thank you for the encouraging words and for making me laugh throughout this journey. A special thanks to my sisters-in-law, Christy and Tracey. You are inspirational, and your ability to be strong leaders in your respective fields as black women makes me strive to be better in my profession. I hope that I am as inspiring to my nieces (Anniah and Lydia), nephew (Caleb), and bonus family (Zayden and Zyan). I am beyond grateful for such an amazing family. A special thanks to my accountability partner, Q. I appreciate your work ethic and motivation to keep pushing. Thank you for everything!

I would also like to thank my mentors and supporters, also known as my dissertation committee. Dr. Donald Snead, thank you for leading the way as the chair. I appreciate your words of encouragement and assistance throughout this process. Dr. Barbara Turnage, I am so grateful for you always speaking your truth and advocating for me to complete this work in a timely manner. Dr. Robyn Ridgley, thank you for providing constructive feedback and guidance. Dr. Vincent Windrow, I am so appreciative of your willingness to polish my ideas and guide me throughout this process. Lastly, thank you, Dr. Claire Cook, for always being

iii

a supporter and providing me encouraging words. Your beneficial corrections elevated my writing. I appreciate the dissertation committee's commitment to aiding me in producing a valuable study.

Finally, I would like to thank all my great friends and colleagues. I am afraid to begin naming friends in fear I will leave someone out. I have some of the most amazing people around me, friends that are more like family. I am blessed for the listening ears who heard me vent throughout the years. I am thankful for those that loved me and were my biggest cheerleaders. You know who you are, and I love each and every one of you.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of family involvement on academic achievement of Black students. The Family Involvement and Academic Success questionnaire was divided into three sections that included the Family Involvement Scale, demographic information, and student grade point average. Participants included 93 Black students from a four-year public university in middle Tennessee. The research found there was a difference in family involvement between Black first- and second- generation students and a relationship to specific behaviors that family participated in, such as freshmen orientation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

**CHAPTER I**

**Introduction**

**Statement of the Problem**

Black student success is a lingering issue in higher education. While more

Black students are enrolling in college, the graduation rates of this population

continue to lag behind White students. Black male students continue to have

lower retention and graduation rates than any other population of students in

college (Farmer & Hope, 2015). Johnson (2019) explained, "While research on

academic achievement of Blacks in elementary and secondary education is

plentiful, there is a need for more research on post-secondary education to

assess factors that influence the collegiate academic achievement of Black

students" (p. 28). Also, an in-depth look at Black students and their support

networks can guide higher education professionals, students, and families toward

strategies to increase college retention rates. While parental involvement is a

proven beneficial factor for academic success in elementary and secondary

schools, there is limited research focused on the impact of parental involvement

in higher education (Johnson, 2019). Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, culture,

educational background, and parent's education are a few factors that impact the

amount of parental or family involvement provided (Harper, Smith, & Davis,

2018). Cullaty (2011) agreed, "These findings suggest that parental involvement

patterns may differ by ethnicity and warrant future research specifically

examining these different ethnic groups of students" (p. 437). The purpose of this research is to explore the effect of family involvement on academic success among Black students in higher learning institutions through a male and female comparison.

**Background of the Problem**

Education affords an entryway to critical thought, self-reliance, and independence (Banerjee, 2016). Jackson et. al. (2013) stated, "According to the dominant culture, education provides an arena of opportunities for fundamental equality among various racial groups" (p. 1). Even though the belief that education is an "equalizer" for underrepresented groups is arguable, society continues to promote the belief through "institutional and educational contexts" (Jackson et. al., 2013).

The American dream gave people hope of becoming intelligent, wealthy, and accessing anything one wanted through hard work. Education is a freedom that Americans believe is essential to obtaining a successful life. As Eaker and Sells (2016) explained,

> …Americans believe education is a cornerstone for a democratic society. Franklin D. Roosevelt (2010) echoed this view in 1938 when he said, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore is education". (p. 17)

Higher education continues to evolve and become more accessible. Through the evolution of accessibility in post-secondary education, a more diverse group of learners has the opportunity to obtain a post-secondary degree. The accessibility of higher education has been an asset to veterans, first-generation students, and students of color. The first colleges in the United States provided access to the upper class with a focus on training clergy (Eaker & Sells, 2016). Thelin and Gasman (2011) stated,

> A good way to chart the history of higher education is to keep in mind that quantitative shifts have signaled qualitative changes. For example, from 1700 to 1900, less than 5 percent of Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two enrolled in college. Between World Wars I and II, this figure increased to about 20 percent, rising to 33 percent in 1960 and dramatically expanding to more than 50 percent in the 1970s. These numbers define the transformation of American higher education from an elite to a mass activity. (p. 3)

As a result of more access, more diverse learners entered higher education. The term "college access" connects to issues like underprepared students, the financial stress of low and middle-class families, discrimination, and social disadvantages that underrepresented students endure (Bragg et. al, 2006). Therefore, although access to higher education exists, it does not equate to success, especially for those learners who the higher education system was not created for or designed for them to succeed in.

A student's race/ethnicity, educational aspirations, and socioeconomic status are connected to student success (Jackson et.al, 2013). The 2012 United States Census Bureau stated that less than 16% of Black males had bachelors' degrees or greater, while 29% of their White counterparts had received at least a bachelors' degree in 2011 (Jackson et.al, 2013). While graduation rates have slightly increased in the last decade there have been no significant changes with closing the gap between Black and White graduates. According to the 2020 United States Census Bureau, 25% of Black people age 18 or older had a bachelor's degree or higher, while 35% of their White counterparts received at least a bachelors' degree. Further review of the census data highlighted 22% of Black males had bachelors' degrees or greater compared to 34% of White males (2021).  Twenty-eight percent of Black females had bachelors' degrees or greater compared 36% of White females. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics report for 2019, four-year and six-year graduation rates for Black students (23.8%, 39.8%) are almost or more than half of the graduation rates of White students (48.3%, 64.4%). Black male students' graduation rate for four-year and six year was 18.1% and 34.2% respectively compared to White males that graduation rate was 42.2% and 61.4% (NCES, 2020). Black females have higher graduation rates than Black males, but are still behind White female and male students. Black female students' graduation rates for four-year and six year was 28.0% and 43.9% respectively compared to White females that graduation rate was 53.5% and 66.9% (NCES, 2020).

Although there are challenges with higher education access expanding, the issues described above also brought about positive possibilities for minority students and professionals. With the growth of diverse learners, there is a need for diverse faculty, professionals, and programs to assist a growing population of students and level the playing field. Assessing the involvement of families within the Black students' academic journey "will aid in understanding and assisting administrators, educators, parents, and students in helping students" obtain their educational goals (Johnson, 2019).

**Theoretical Framework**

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective is utilized throughout education to explore the relationships of ecosystems and their impact on individual's educational experience. Jackson et. al (2013) explained, "Ecological systems theory recognizes the relevance of shared experiences among individuals within a particular group" (p. 2). In 1979 Bronfenbrenner identified five ecosystems (macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, microsystem, and chronosystem) within the ecological perspective. The ecological perspective verifies that student's overlapping environments effects the interactions and academic choices of the student. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained three features of the definition of ecology of human development,

> First, the developing person is viewed not merely as a tabula rasa on
> which the environment makes its impact, but as a growing dynamic entity
> that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which it

resides. Second, since the environment also exerts its influence, requiring

a process of mutual accommodation the interaction between person and

environment is viewed as two-directional, that is, characterized by

reciprocity. Third, the environment defined as relevant to developmental

processes is not limited to a single, immediate setting but is extended to

incorporate interconnections between such settings, as well as to external

influences emanating for the larger surroundings. (p. 21 – 22)

The dynamic entity bidirectional transfer and the incorporate interconnections

between settings correlate to the intersectionality framework. Intersectionality is a

theory based on inspecting the interconnections and modalities of social systems

and classifications (Atewologun, 2018; Kyoung Ro & Loya, 2015).

Intersectionality is applicable for higher education researchers and professionals

because it permits an "analytical sophistication and offers theoretical

explanations" for the importance of disaggregating groups by race/ethnicity,

class, biological sex, or sexual orientation (Atewologun, 2018).

Within this study, the ecological perspective and intersectionality

framework are utilized to demonstrate the benefit of family involvement in a Black

student's collegiate career. The ecological perspective highlighted the effect

ecosystems have on the student's preparation and continuation through their

college academic journey. The microsystem and mesosystem levels are

prominent and profound throughout the student's educational experiences.

Zhang and Smith (2013) provided examples of the microsystem and mesosystem

levels in the statement regarding high school to college transition, "While the academic intensity and the quality of one's high school curriculum are crucial for academic success and making a smooth transition to college, other factors, such as parents, friends, high school teachers, guidance counselors, college professors, academic advisors, college orientation programs, and first–year seminars, facilitate students' transition from high school to college" (p. 830).

Recognizing the macrosystem and exosystem levels may require more reflection and thoughtfulness. Within the Black student's experience, the exosystem may be reflected by the institution's policies, procedures, governing board, or state's higher education commission. Students may not have direct contact with these groups, but they are impacted by the decisions of the groups. Black culture is as an example of the macrosystem. The Black family has strong bonds and traditions that impact the Black student's learning approaches and acclimatization to higher education settings. Therefore, the ecological perspective and intersectionality framework will assist in the suggestion that family involvement in higher learning institutions will have a different effect on Black males' and females' academic success.

**Statement of Purpose**

College campuses are more diverse in age, ethnicity, and gender today than in previous decades (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2019). Students bring life's rewards and challenges with them as they start their academic journey at higher learning institutions. As Lukianoff and Haidt (2019) stated, "They arrive on campus having

faced varying degrees of bigotry, poverty, trauma, and mental illness" (p. 8). Researchers explain underrepresented students (i.e., first-generation and students of color) have more disadvantages when transitioning to college than their counterparts (Callan, 2018, Jackson et. al., 2013). The exposure to new higher education terminology, procedures and policies may be overwhelming in the midst of discovering how to navigate and balance their academic and social life.

Research is specifically needed for Black students. Black students' disadvantages may be redirected by positive interventions through coordinated efforts with high school counselors, admissions, academic advisors, and parents (Cullaty, 2011; Zhang & Smith, 2011). More research is needed to provide interventions and support to aiding underrepresented students in their transition to college and persistence to graduation. Although researching all Black students is valuable, taking a deeper dive and examining the unique differences among the group will add more significance to the development of interventions, programs, and further research needed to support Black student success.

**Statement of Research Questions**

1. Does academic achievement in higher learning institutions differ between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students?

2. Does the amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differ from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions?

3. Does family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differ between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students?

4. Does family involvement of Black students in higher learning institutions correlate with student's GPA?

**Research Hypotheses**

From these research questions the following hypotheses were derived.

$H_1$: Academic achievement in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students.

$H_2$: The amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differs from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions.

$H_3$: Family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students' second-generation Black students.

$H_4$: Family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions will be related to academic success in college.

**Assumptions**

1. Subjects selected for analysis are included once.

2. Subjects selected for analysis will remain constant throughout the study.

**Definition of Terms**

- Academic Success – Based on Middle Tennessee State University institution's graduation requirements, students must have at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 grade point average scale

- Affluent Family – An upper-class and upper-middle-class family with an annual income of $125,000 or greater (Hamilton et. al., 2018).

- Black – African American, non-Hispanic

- Family/Parental Involvement – Family members could include mother, father, siblings, grandparents, and extended family. Involvement is the participation in the educational processes and experiences of the student including financial, emotional, and physical support throughout the student's academic journey (Johnson, 2009). Parental involvement may be categorized in various ways; parental participation in school events, direct educational communication, parental engagement related to school activities and learning. (Jeynes, 2017).

- First-generation – College students who enrolled in postsecondary education and whose parents do not have any postsecondary experience. Students without at least one parent with a bachelor's degree or a higher level of educational attainment (Redford & Hoyer, 2017).

- Intersectionality – An intersection in social sciences represents the meeting point of two or more social categories and axes, or systems of power, dominance, or oppression (Atewologun, 2018)

- Less Affluent Family –middle-class, lower-middle-class, or working class with an annual income less than $40,000 (Hamilton et. al., 2018).

- Macrosystem – Refers to subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

- Microsystem – The microsystem is defined as pattern of actions, roles, and social relationships experienced by the developing person in a setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

- Mesosystem –The interrelationships of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

- Exosystem – The exosystem is one or more settings which does not directly involve the developing person, but the actions of the settings affect the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

- Partners in Education (P.I. E.) – Middle Tennessee State University program that permits communication of academic information and suggestions to families to aid in the support of their student

- Students of Color – non-White students

- Student Success – Measured by retention and graduation rates

- Underrepresented Student – First-generation and students of color

**Limitations & Delimitations**

This comparative study utilizes independent t-tests, chi-square tests, and correlations to examine the impact of family involvement on the academic success of Black males and females. The study is limited by the data collected

from one regionally accredited, predominately White institution in the south of the

United States. Therefore, the results may not be representative of students from

other regions, countries, or institutions. Including a sample of students from other

institution types such as historically Black colleges or community colleges may

provide a broader perspective on family involvement related to college

experiences (Johnson, 2009). Also, there is no control of the random selection or

of the number of students who will participate in the study, and consequently

there is no control of the student's family or educational background that will be

analyzed.

**CHAPTER II**

**Review of Literature**

**Introduction**

The achievement gap persists in every level of education. One area of interest across the nation is closing the achievement gap between Black and White students, specifically by improving Black males' graduation rates. Stout et.al (2018) stated, "Diversifying the undergraduate student body and retaining that diverse cohort to graduation is a goal for many U.S. institutions of higher education yet attaining that goal has proven elusive" (p. 399). Through the review of literature, the ecological perspective will be used to examine race and diversity in higher education, the factors that impact student success, and the educational experiences of Black male and female students. It is important to note that the literature review consists of a few dated studies due to the limited literature focused on parental involvement and Black students in higher education.

Several variables affect higher learning institutions and their ability to help students succeed. Persistence, retention, and graduation rates are customary variables universities and colleges concentrate on to measure student success. The attention given to graduation rates at higher learning institutions became prominent after 1985 (Al-Haddad, Boone & Campbell, 2018). Retention and graduation rates became a factor when state funding formulas transitioned from the enrollment of students to utilizing graduation data to incentivize institutions to graduate more students. Larocca and Carr (2020) noted, "Since 1979 more than

thirty states have adopted 'performance funding' for public institutions of higher education. Under performance funding, a portion of the state appropriations for each institution is determined by the institution's achievement of performance goals on such metrics as retention and graduation" (pp.493). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines graduation rates as "the overall 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year degree-granting institutions". With rising tuition costs and fewer college graduates obtaining gainful employment, society continues to scrutinize and question the benefit of a college degree (Gagliardi et.al., 2018). Millea et.al. (2018) highlighted,

> Retention and graduation rates have become key metrics for assessing progress and success for colleges and universities, often using first-time freshmen as a subject of study. Students who leave before they complete their degrees can cost universities thousands of dollars in unrealized tuition revenue and replacement recruiting. For students, dropping out can mean unrealized potential and lower earnings over their working careers. The success of the university and the success of its students are intertwined. Some factors can be influenced by institutional programming or incentives, but other factors are external or based on student-specific attributes. (p. 309)

States and institutions have established programs to support students in pursuing college and completing with a degree. The Complete College America website noted, Tennessee's completion efforts initiative, Drive to 55, sets a goal that 55% of Tennesseans will obtain a college degree or certificate by 2025. Universities also instituted programs to encourage students to complete their degrees on time to assist with reducing student loan debt and boosting graduation rates. The "Get More in Four" initiatives across the United States motivated students to focus on completing a degree within four or fewer years. Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) recently created a Black Male Initiative to increase the graduation rate of Black men in the state. Focus on four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates are now a central area for higher education systems. Researchers note that those with college degrees are beneficial to society, as well as they are more satisfied with their job, have higher salaries, and lower unemployment rates (Al-Haddad, Boone & Campbell, 2018; DeAngelo et. al., 2011).

Although research highlights the importance of completing a degree and national and state governments encourage students to graduate in fewer years, Black students continue to have lower retention and graduation rates than White students. Educational background, parent's education, academic preparedness, parental/family support, attitudinal-behavioral characteristics, pre-college characteristics, and academic ethic are factors attributed to Black students' retention and graduation rates (Zhang & Smith, 2011). Parental

involvement in a student's college career can be impactful also, especially for students of color. As an example, Latinx students have strong cultural and social ties to their families that may offer educational resources or social barriers (Hamilton et. al., 2018). Black students also find parental support an important form of social capital that assists their transition to a higher learning institution (Zhang & Smith, 2011).

Examining the literature of Black students' higher education experiences through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective and the intersectionality framework can shed light on challenges and areas of opportunities for Black males and females. For example, the mesosystem is defined as a system of microsystems, such as for a student, the relationship between home, school/university, family, friends, and work (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The relationship of Black students to their campus experience may be different than other students due to the lack of Black faculty. The lack of diverse faculty plays a major role in the academic success of students of color, as well as all students on a college campus (Turner, 2002). Wood (2008) asserted, "The under-representation of African-American faculty in public higher education is one of the most ethical dilemmas facing colleges and universities today" (p. 2). The mesosystem discussion will expound the relationship of Black faculty and Black student success, as well as evaluate how other relationships impact Black students through intersectionality. The review of literature assesses the

ecological perspective's ecosystems and the contribution of intersectionality of systems related to Black students' higher education experiences.

**Theoretical Perspective**

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory provided a foundation for the development of a person and the impact of interactions between the developing person and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) illustrated, "The ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls" (p. 3). The most internal level is the microsystem. The microsystem is defined as pattern of actions, roles, and social relationships experienced by the developing person in a setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A setting is explained as a place to engage in face-to-face interaction, such as a classroom, dormitory, campus event or home. The next ecosystem is the interrelationships of microsystems. A mesosystem for a college student may include family, school, work, and social life. The third ecosystem is the exosystem. The exosystem is one or more settings which does not directly involve the developing person, but the actions of the settings affect the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As mentioned earlier, the institution's governing board is an example of the exosystem for a college student. The governing board policies on hiring Black faculty and staff or committing to the effort of increasing Black students' graduation rates by a certain percentage is another illustration of the exosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained, "The macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form and

content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying consistencies" (p.26). The macrosystem embraces the "overarching" cultural customs and beliefs that influence the person (Jackson et.al., 2013). For example, although classrooms, churches, and sporting events are a common part of the United States culture, the experience is different depending on race/ethnicity, social class, and religion. The final ecosystem, chronosystem, relates to time events that happen in the developing person's life.

**Intersectionality framework.** When researching Black women, it is reasonable that the intersectionality theory will surface. Intersectionality has proved to be a practical concept in many disciplines including, history, sociology, literature, philosophy, feminist studies, ethnic studies, sexual orientation studies, and legal studies (Cho et. al., 2013). An intersection in social sciences represents the meeting point of "two or more social categories and axes, or systems of power, dominance, or oppression" (Atewologun, 2018). Intersectionality places emphasis on the individuals' and groups' multiple associations at the individual (microsystem) and societal (macrosystem) levels (Atewologun, 2018). Lukianoff and Haidt (2019) wrote, "Intersectionality is a theory based on several insights that we believe are valid and useful: power matters, members of groups sometimes act cruelly or unjustly to preserve their power, and people who are members of multiple identity groups can face various

forms of disadvantage in ways that are often invisible to others" (p. 68). The ecological perspective will be used to bring visibility to the factors that influence Black student success and the intersections they endure during their collegiate career. Evaluating the differences in educational experiences between Black female students and Black male students will assist in breaking down the intersections of these two groups and the impact they may have on their academic success.

**Race and Diversity in Higher Education (Macrosystem & Exosystem)**

The United States is a country built on the division of races. Most races that entered the country were faced with challenges to assimilate (Pinkney, 1969). Unfortunately, the assimilation of Black Americans may have been more difficult than other races (Pinkney, 1969). This is evident in most industries in the country but professional sports. Higher education is not exempt from the lack of assimilation of Black people. Johnson (2009) stated, "For centuries, Blacks have endeavored to assimilate into the United States" (p. 2). Assimilation can be misinterpreted for accommodation when looking at academic achievement (Brayboy et. al., 2007). Johnson (2009) elaborated, "Accommodation is a process that is used from the political standpoint that attempts to illustrate that actions have been taken to regulate differences in education of Blacks instead of these actions actually being corrected to improve these differences" (p. 2). When focusing on eliminating inequities and the achievement gap in higher education

the problem must be approached in a comprehensive manner rather than

blaming individuals or specific areas of institutions (Banks & Dohy, 2019).

The achievement gap continues to be prevalent throughout all levels of

education, specifically within post-secondary institutions. Tinto explained,

On the surface, America's public commitment to provide access to any

individual who seeks a post-secondary education seems to be working.

Our higher educational system enjoys one of the highest participation

rates in the world. More than 16.3 million students currently enroll in US

public and private two and four-year colleges. In the past twenty years,

enrollments have grown over 25 percent; the proportion of high school

graduates entering college immediately after high school has increased

from about 49 percent in 1980 to 66.7 percent in 2004. (p. 1)

A major factor that impacts the achievement gap is the percentage of enrollment.

Although more minority students are enrolling in college their White counterparts

are still enrolling more students than Black students. College enrollment rates

among traditional-age (18 to 24 years old) college students increased between

2000 and 2018, Black students' rates rose from 31 to 37 percent and Hispanic

students' rates grew from 22 to 36 percent (NCES, 2020). Black female students'

enrollment rate was 8 percentage points higher than Black male students in 2018

(NCES, 2020). Delleville (2019) highlighted, "U.S. college students have also

become older and more racially diverse, with Hispanic enrollment increasing by

240% since the mid-1900s, and African American student enrollment growing by

72% in the same timeframe" (p. 84). Although enrollment rates are increasing, students of color must be retained and graduated.

Minority students' graduation rates are lower than White students (Delleville, 2019). Twenty-three percent of Black students, 24% of Native Americans, and 15% of Hispanics earned their degree in 2018, compared to 40% of White students (Delleville, 2019). Banks and Bohy (2019) stated, "Six-year completion rates at four-year institutions reveal that African American students were the least likely to graduate (45.9%), followed by Hispanic students (55%)" (p.118). White and Asian students' graduation rates were twelve to twenty-five percentage points higher than Black and Hispanic students, 67.2% and 71.1% respectively (Banks & Bohy, 2019). Several factors impact students' graduation rates and their overall student success in college.

First-generation and students of color often face challenges outside and inside of the classroom that impact their ability to succeed. Opportunity gaps are prevalent many years before students enter college (Banks & Bohy, 2019). These gaps in systems like health, housing, nutrition, and safety directly affect a student's educational and overall life experiences. Students' health and safety matters are not just limited to physical health and safety. Students of color endure psychological and sociological forms of racism that factor into their academic success. Banks and Bohy (2019), emphasized, "Students of color are often exposed to instances of microaggressions from their White professors where a belief may persist that they are intellectually inferior to Whites" (p.120).

As minorities, students of color are expected to adjust to their new environment and be culturally aware of how to react and handle racism from peers or professors. The stressors and instances of implicit bias are directly linked to student success and may cause students of color to become disengaged, have feelings of isolation, and feel a lack of belonging (Banks & Bohy, 2019). The negative feelings also impact students of color stop-out and drop-out rates.

Retention and graduation rates provide a measurable outcome for higher-learning institutions to pursue. A challenge is bridging the gap between a university's strategic plan and its actionable steps that impact students' day-to-day lives. As Eaker and Sells (2016) stated,

The issue of enhancing student success is not one of rhetoric but rather one of reality. Sadly, it is all too easy for the cumulative effect of countless acts of thoughtlessness to swamp the message of supporting student success. The leadership challenge is to close the gap between the rhetoric ("We are committed to helping our students succeed") and the reality that the data indicate ("However, more than likely, only about half of you will graduate"). (p. 127 – 128)

The high impact practices, performance funding programs, and strategies to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates research studies (Johnson & Stage, 2018; Larocca & Carr, 2020; Talbert, 2012) provided a clear justification for the need of more research to help understand the relationship between initiatives and graduation rates. Retention and graduation rates indicate

where efforts need to be better focused. Banks and Dohy (2019) detailed,

"Barriers to educational opportunities at institutions of higher learning for students

of color exist and these institutional barriers are often overlooked when looking to

improve retention and graduation rates of marginalized populations" (pp. 128).

Concentrated efforts must be established to assist Black students succeed in

colleges, especially at Predominately White Institutions (PWI). Utilizing retention

and graduation data to guide student success initiatives and hire

underrepresented faculty is beneficial to help students of color graduation rates

improve.

Higher graduation rates for students of color benefit everyone. The 2020

goal set by the Department of Education and President Obama was to increase

the number of Americans with a postsecondary certificate, credential, or degree

by 50 percent (Price, 2019). Banks and Dohy (2019) expressed, "Access to and

graduation from institutions of higher learning for all populations is imperative to

creating a more equitable and democratic society" (p. 118). College graduates

have "higher salaries, greater potential for career growth, and lower

unemployment rates" than those without a postsecondary degree (Delleville,

2019). Creating a culture for Black students to excel is not only an academic

issue but an ethical economic matter also.

**Factors that Impact Student Success (Mesosystem)**

**Parental/Family Involvement.** Parental involvement in higher education

has become more important and impactful in recent years. Johnson (2019)

explained, "Factors related to student mental health, financial support, and safety of the campus have impacted the increase of parent's interest in their students' overall health and well-being, as well as their academic success" (p. 27). Parental involvement incorporates behaviors of parent to student interactions and parent to the institution interactions (Cullaty, 2011). Although research has found parental and family involvement to have a positive impact on academic success in elementary and secondary schools, more research is needed to determine the result at the post-secondary level. Cullaty (2011) stated, "Since the year 2000, articles in higher education publications have documented a trend of more intense parental behavior on college campuses" (p. 426). Parents of previous generations assisted students through the college selection and admission processes, and then allowed students to find their way. The parental role has changed. Families are shaping their student's experiences during college well after their selection and enrollment process is completed (Hamilton et. al., 2018). Although more research is being focused on parental involvement in higher education, there is still a lack of empirical evidence that supports an increase or significant effect on students (Cullaty, 2011). Several factors such as safety, financial concerns, and parenting practices have impacted the increased involvement of parents in higher education.

The "internet Generation", iGen, or Generation Z are people born in or after 1995. Lukianoff and Haidt (2019) suggested iGen and "safetyism" are two of the leading factors which led to students increased levels of contact and

involvement with the parents than past generations. It is probable that one factor that contributed to an increase in parental involvement on college campuses is crisis situations. Parents may feel entitled to be more involved in their student's campus life to protect the student and aid in providing them safety. With social media, television, and other media outlets, parents of prospective and current students have access to more information than before. Merriman (2008) discussed, "Parents are more in tune with campus issues because of the prevailing culture of fear in society overall, as well as technology" (p.58). If crises make national news, parents may withdraw students or require students to transfer (Wang & Hutchins, 2010). With events such as COVID-19, natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, and the Virginia Tech shooting, parents have a right to be concerned about their child's welfare.

Merriman (2008) highlighted that parents and higher learning institutions share a common goal. She stated, "Parents and university administrators share their commitment to student safety" (p.57). Higher learning institutions can benefit by including parents in their communication plans. This added communication could be beneficial during anytime of the academic year, but extremely impactful during a time of crisis. Although campus leaders think about crisis from several aspects, parents are thinking about their children specifically (Merriman, 2008). Administrators must recognize this when dealing with parents during crisis. Valid, frequent, and clear information must be provided during a crisis to give parents ease.

While safety concerns have increased the amount of parental involvement on a college campus, the current parental practices also play a major role. The safety issues not only include physical safety but emotional safety as well (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2019). With more students entering college with diagnoses of depression and other mental illness, the parental behaviors are intertwined with safety matters. In 2000, The Parent Project study found that only 2% of the 631 parents surveyed were concerned about their child's health and safety as they entered college (Turrentine et al., 2000). If the same study was conducted today the findings may have a much different result. Lukianoff and Haidt (2019) wrote, "Grossly expanded conceptions of trauma and safety are now used to justify the overprotection of children of all ages – even college students, are sometimes said to need safe spaces and trigger warnings lest words and ideas put them in danger" (p. 31-32). Family involvement can assist or hinder student's academic success in college (Hamilton et. al., 2018). Research guiding parents toward the appropriate behaviors to assist students toward graduation is beneficial especially for parents of students of color and middle- and lower-class students.

Parental support, specifically for Black students, provides a beneficial support network to aid them in their transition to college (Zhang & Smith, 2011). A research study within an Introduction to Sociology course evaluated 3,419 Black students and their perceptions of helpfulness of parents, friends, high school teachers and guidance counselors, college professors and academic advisors, orientation, and a first-year seminar course in the transition to the

institution (Zhang & Smith, 2011). The study's population of Black students represented 21.5% of the student body at a Southeast Carnegie doctoral research university with an undergraduate enrollment of 15,500 students. Zhang and Smith (2011) described, "This course contained a cross-section of students and constitutes a convenience sample that mirrors the student body (51.2% female, 48.8% male; 21.5% Black, 64.9% White)" (p. 831). The study was a survey compiled of 53 questions related to academic ethic and the transition to college. The questions focused on how much time was given to academic, social, and work events while in high school and college, as well as attitudes toward learning, basic demographic information, beliefs about their college preparation provided from their high school, specific behaviors peers, parents, and others provided in aiding them in transitioning to college, and the helpfulness of the behaviors of their peers, parents and others. The results informed that mothers provided the highest amount of help and were the most helpful in the transition process. High school teachers, fathers, friends, and high school guidance counselors were found to be helpful as well. High school counselors, a college orientation program, and the first-year seminar courses were reported more helpful for Black students than White students. The study found that academic advisors offered the least amount of help when transitioning to college. When comparing advisors to the first-year seminar courses, the college orientation program, professors, fathers, and mothers, students reported advisors were less likely to encourage rigorous work, discuss helpful information, or help with

school-related problems or nonacademic problems. Fathers of Black students

provided less encouragement for difficult course work and academic

achievement. The research also concluded that mothers of Black college

students provided slightly more help than mothers of White students. Zhang and

Smith (2011) explained, "Black females reported more discussion about useful

information with mothers than all groups, but only the difference between Black

males and White males was significant ($p < .10$)" (p. 838).

A qualitative study, which interviewed 59 mothers and fathers, found that

affluent families' parental practices with college daughters were different than

those of middle-class or lower-class families. First-generation and students of

color are often a part of middle- and lower-class families. Within the study,

affluent or privileged families are defined as upper-class and upper-middle-class

families with an annual income of $125,000 or greater (Hamilton et. al., 2018).

Less affluent families were categorized as middle-class, lower-middle-class, or

working class with an annual income less than $40,000. Hamilton et. al. (2018)

found, "Among affluent families, 87 percent – or all but three families – included

at least moderately involved parents who were in regular contact with their

children, monitored their children's well-being, contributed substantial funds, and

offered academic, social, and career advice in times of need" (p.116). Affluent

parents provided the "college concierge" approach to parenting (Hamilton et. al.,

2018). They assisted their students to move effectively and efficiently throughout

the college process into the workforce, as they did not see their daughters as

"grown-up" yet. Affluent parents assisted their daughters with admittance to rigorous degree programs while other parents were unaware of the benefit of early admittance. Hamilton et. al. (2018) stated, "…not a single less privileged student applied or gained access to the competitive business school, which provided a rigorous academic peer culture, encouraged professionalization (the best-dressed students on campus were from the business school), and channeled students into majors thought to have good labor market value" (p. 118). Students from affluent family backgrounds were able to enjoy the social aspect of college life more. They were provided monthly allowances that allowed them the opportunity to participate in Greek organizations and did not have to work (Hamilton et. al., 2018). Affluent parents also provided access to institutional resources that added to their students' college experiences.

Less affluent families were described as outsiders in relation to the college process. They assumed their daughters were adults and did not need much parental input. These working-class families were less involved in the student's academic life, and their daughters arrived at campus on their own from the beginning (Hamilton et. al., 2018). They felt unequipped to offer academic advice or direction due to their careers or reduced time on a college campus. Hamilton et. al., (2018) narrated a parent's response,

> If we were doctors, we'd lead them down the doctor path. If were
>
> attorneys, we'd maybe lead 'em down that path and know all the ins and
>
> outs about it, but we're not. I'm a firefighter and I told [them], "You really

don't wanna be a firefighter. I've done this long enough to know that you

don't really wanna do this." (p. 122)

Families of less privilege were less involved and felt their daughters had school

under control. Within one occurrence in this study, a parent was interviewed and

believed her daughter was doing fine, but she was on academic probation at the

time of the interview (Hamilton et. al., 2018). Another parent was knowledgeable

of her daughter's challenges, but opted to not get involved. Less privileged

families expected the institution to provide support. Hamilton et. al. (2018)

described, "Less affluent parents were often less involved, in part because they

looked to the university to offer comprehensive academic counseling; they did

not see it as their job or as something they could do well" (p. 122). Working –

class families had limited contact with their students. One student expressed that

she regulated the amount of contact to establish boundaries from dealing with

the "serious financial and emotional troubles" of her family (Hamilton et. al.,

2018).

Affluent and less affluent families had vastly different perspectives on the

value of a bachelor's degree. Affluent parents understood and utilized their social

capital within the college and community to aid in the success of their student

while the middle- and lower-class parents profoundly believed in the "value of a

bachelor's degree for economic mobility" (Hamilton et. al., 2018). These parents

focused solely on their children earning the degree without grasping the

instrumental components of the college experience that aid in gainful

employment, such as co-curricular activities like internships and student organization participation. As Hamilton et. al. (2018) stated, "Affluent parents were playing a long-term career game, but less affluent parents did not realize the nature of the competition" (p. 124).

The above-mentioned studies illustrate the complexities of intersectionality at the mesosystem level for underrepresented disadvantaged students. Parental involvement in higher-learning institutions is valuable if performed correctly. More educated parents and affluent families value education and encourage not only academic success but social academic engagement as well (Jackson et. al., 2013). Social engagement with professors is extremely valuable to the college experience (Talbert, 2012). Black students face challenges with connecting and engaging with college professors due to the lack of faculty of color. Underrepresented students' parents rely on the institution to provide support to their students. Those parents may not realize the shortage of Black faculty and staff on campuses and the impact it has on the amount of support that can be provided.

**The Impact of Black Faculty on Academic Success.** As previously noted, the student population of colleges and universities is more diverse than ever. Turner (2002) explained, "While we have witnessed steady growth in the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population, we have not seen similar diversification among college faculty" (p. 1). Black faculty represent approximately the same percentages they did two decades ago (Wood, 2008). In 2018, 53% of full-time

professors were White males, 27% were White females, 8% were Asian/Pacific Islander males, and 3% were Asian/Pacific Islander females, and 2 % each of Black males, females, and Hispanic males (NCES, 2020). As for assistant full-time professors, 34% were White males, 39% White females, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander male, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander female, and 5% Black females, 3% for Black males, as well as 3% for Hispanic females, and 3% for Hispanic males (NCES, 2020). Students need professors that look like them and who relate to their cultural experiences (Johnson, 2009). Black faculty are not only beneficial in the development of the Black students but also in all students. Black faculty are more likely to "interact with all students, utilize engaging and collaborative teaching strategies, highlight higher order cognitive experiences, and take on diversity related activities" than White faculty (Wood, 2008).

The presence of Black faculty on college campuses is important to the overall academic success of Black students. Talbert (2012) explained, "Students who have a greater sense of belonging to the academic environment are comfortable with matriculating through the process and have a higher chance of completing their degree program" (p.23). Building relationships with professors enhances the students' sense of connectedness and affiliation to the university while aiding them in gaining opportunities to develop and learn as an individual (Talbert, 2012). Wood (2008) outlined,

> The presence of African American faculty on college campuses is
>
> important to the success of African American students (Allen and Haniff,

1991; Roach, 1999; Stith and Russell, 1994). This success can be attributed to enhanced mentoring relationships (Lee, 1999; Malone and Malone 2001) which are seen as more "student-centered" than non-same-race mentoring (Guiffrida, 2005), and an advanced African American cultural knowledge/experience of issues confronting African America students (Cornelius et. al, 1997). In an educational era in which graduation rates for America students remains low, ethical issues of equity in relation to proportional representation must be considered. (p.1)

Several myths are presented when higher education institutions are questioned about the lack of diversity within their faculty. Often the pipeline argument is used as a reason for the lack of diversity within the faculty (Wood, 2008). The pipeline argument alleges there are not enough qualified Black doctorates to fill vacant professor positions although Black students are obtaining doctoral degrees in record numbers (Wood, 2008). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported at the doctoral level, the number of degrees conferred between academic years 2004 – 2005 and 2104 – 2015 increased by 56% for Black students, 84% for Hispanic students, and 46 % for Asian/Pacific Islander students. Turner (2002) highlighted other myths and stereotypes such as, "our institution cannot compete for doctorates of color because everyone wants them"; "we cannot match the high salaries offered to faculty of color"; there are no qualified candidates of color for our open faculty positions"; faculty of color would not want to come to our campus"; faculty of

color will leave for more money and prestige"; recruiting faculty of color takes away opportunities for White faculty" (p. 16). Interestingly the myths are easily dismissed when reviewing hiring practices. Often faculty of color are replaced by another faculty of color when a position becomes available (Wood, 2008). In order to hire more diverse faculty, institutions must educate and communicate to hiring committees the education rationale for hiring diverse faculty members (Turner, 2002).

Stout et. al (2018) stated, "Currently, 75.2% of faculty feel that students need to increase their knowledge and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups, and 93.6% feel that a racially/ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experiences of all students" (p. 402). If faculty believe the student population should be diverse, the case should be the same for the faculty. Several factors play a role in the hiring of faculty of color. One issue is the demographic makeup of the hiring committee (Wood, 2008). The faculty of the university is mainly comprised of White males and females, thus hiring committees are comprised of White males and females. Wood (2008) explained, "Often, the method of increasing African American faculty representation has been relegated to placing affirmative action representatives on hiring committees and diversifying the hiring committee" (p. 2). Although these actions are helpful, there are many more environmental factors that need to be evaluated to encourage diversity hiring. Students of color must be engaged by programs and faculty that look like them to assist them toward graduation. An integral part of

holding institutions accountable to the success of students of color is hiring the appropriate faculty and staff to provide students of color the greatest opportunity of obtaining their goal of a degree.

**Student Success Initiatives.** Student success is an area that is continuing to develop in higher education. Zhang (2016) explained, "The most recent notable trend of academic affairs and student affairs combining efforts on both curricular and cocurricular to increase student retention and matriculation is known as student success" (p. 58). Due to funding formulas, universities and colleges must demonstrate their ability to graduate students. Focusing on student success helps higher learning institutions be accountable to students they enroll. There are several circumstances or situations that affect institutions and their ability to help students succeed. Persistence, retention, and graduation rates are areas higher learning institutions focus on to assess students' academic success. Student success initiatives often focus on institutional factors and student attributes (Millea, et al., 2018). Programs are developed for target populations such as students of color, first-generation, nontraditional, honors students, freshmen, and sophomores to support them on their path to graduation (Caruth, 2018; Millea, et.al, 2018). Colleges and universities can increase student success by continuing to develop effective programs for at-risk students (particularly Black males the most at-risk population in higher education), aid students with financial stresses, and utilize parents to reach the common goal of graduating students.

At-risk students (e.g., minority, first-generation, students with disabilities, probation students, Black male students) need programs and initiatives to help them excel and graduate. Minority students are enrolling in college at larger rates than before, but their success rates still lag behind their White counterparts (Harper et. al, 2018). Black male student success initiatives have flourished in aiding Black males' transition to predominately White institutions, and the hope is continued programming will guide more toward graduation. Welbeck and Torres (2019) stated,

> Heightened attention to the college persistence and graduation rates of men of color over the last 15 to 20 years has fueled a movement of college administrators, student leaders, faculty members, and post-secondary researchers who have worked to change narratives for men of color, in particular the narrative centered on their deficits rather than their achievements. This movement is grounded in an understanding that men of color bring a variety of assets to college that shine in a supportive community with strong peers and mentoring relationships. (p. 1)

The University of Utah and the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) have focused on developing holistic programs to meet the needs of their minority populations. The Village Block U program was created in 2016 by two Black doctoral students as a bridge program for Utah African immigrant and African American middle and high school students with interest in pursuing college (Hotchkins, et. al, 2019). An extension of the program was also created

for a Black cohort of students to help them complete their general education

requirements during their first year at the University of Utah. Hotchkins et al.

(2019) stated,

> The overall purpose of the Block U was to help students achieve the goal
>
> of completing general education requirements in year one while being in a
>
> primarily Black cohort with other students of color to provide an in-class
>
> supportive racial space of culture affirmation and academic support while
>
> being taught by an African American full professor. (p. 28)

The Male Student Success Initiative (MSSI) was created by the CCBC to support

male students of color throughout their academic careers (Welbeck & Torres,

2019). The MSSI program model features areas of community and brotherhood,

success mentors, culturally responsive instructional approaches, professional

and leadership development, and student support services referrals. Although all

the areas the MSSI program features are important, three discussed should be

highlighted, uplifted, and implemented more in higher learning institutions.

Success mentors, culturally responsive instructional approach, and

community/brotherhood are valuable factors to help men of color develop.

Success mentors are defined as alumni who provide advice about navigating the

students' first year at CCBC. These mentors provide support and serve as

"campus connectors" (Welbeck & Torres, 2019). Having professors of color

allows students to see themselves in a person of intelligence and status.

Professors who are trained in culturally responsive teaching will aid students in

engaging through making learning relevant to the students of color. Culturally

responsive professors provide similar perspectives and demonstrate it through

reading materials and assignments that create a deeper level of student

engagement (Welbeck & Torres, 2019). Community and brotherhood are instilled

throughout the program of MSSI through group meetings, Success Mentors, and

classrooms led by men of color. Welbeck and Torres (2019) explained,

"…Educators of color tend to have higher expectations of students of color,

helping mitigate the harmful effects of 'stereotype threat': the negative

consequences that ensue when the idea is projected onto men of color that they

are incapable of succeeding in college (p. 3)."  Student-mentoring programs like

MSSI's Success Mentors, provide an opportunity for students of color to receive

a direct personal approach of how to navigate through their studies and persist

toward graduation (Talbert, 2012). The systemic approach of MSSI aids students

of color in maneuvering through a new environment, while boosting their self-

efficacy.

Such programs as Block U and MSSI create a sense of belonging for

students of color at colleges and universities. Student engagement is also

positively impacted by similar strategically developed programs. Student success

initiatives linked to course design in reading and writing, as well as, alleviating

financial constraints are beneficial for students to persist and graduate (Caruth,

2018; Millea, et al., 2018). Millea, et al. (2018) found that the largest impact on

graduation was financial. Nearly 13,000 first-time, full-time incoming freshmen

students' records were retrieved over a seven-year period from a mid-size public university in the Southeast of the United States. About half of the students in the study were male and 75% were White. Sixty-four percent of the students obtained grant aid, 27% received subsidized loans, 34% utilized merit-based scholarships, and only 3% had athletic scholarships (Millea, et al., 2018). The types of financial aid students received had very different outcomes. Millea, et al. (2018) stated, "Of the 12,812 incoming students, 80% were retained, meaning they were enrolled in the following fall semester. Fifty-seven percent of the freshmen graduated within six years" (p. 312). Merit-based scholarships increased graduation probability by 19%; whereas athletic scholarships did not impact graduation (Millea, et al., 2018). Grant aid increased the probability of graduating by 9%, and students that used unsubsidized loans, graduation probability decreased by 2.5% (Millea, et al., 2018). Regardless of if student success initiatives are designed for students of color or all students, adding programs that help students ease financial stress could boost retention and graduation rates.

Parental/family involvement is another area that should be increased within student success initiatives. Although there is a lot of research related to parental involvement and its benefits at the secondary level, there is a lack of research related to parental involvement at the collegiate level (Johnson, 2019). With the present generation relying on their parents more than previous generations, institutions have found more parents are communicating with staff

and administration than before (Johnson, 2019). Higher-learning institutions could educate parents on the expectations of the university, as well as teach them about healthy ways to support their students throughout their collegiate careers. As a result, parents of first-generation and students of color may gain a better perspective of the college experience, and be more equipped to connect their child to campus resources. Universities should create programming to utilize parents as allies to reach the common goal of students graduating.

Colleges and universities can increase student success by continuing to develop effective programs for at-risk students, aid students with financial stresses, and utilize parents to reach the common goal of graduating students. As higher education continues to evolve the culture of student success will continue to adapt. Continued research in the area of student success will benefit colleges and universities to learn and implement more programs that are effective in increasing retention and graduation rates.

**Educational Experiences of the Black Male and Female (Microsystem)**

Black students have different educational experiences than their White counterparts (Banks & Dohy, 2019). From preschool to high school, Black students in the United States are absorbed into a Eurocentric educational environment. Often theoretical concepts and applications employed in educational settings were researched and designed for white students. Black female students have more success within the Eurocentric education system, but Black males have challenges assimilating. Although Black male and female

students share the same race, their educational experiences vastly vary (Callan, 2018).

Within the Black population, there are several cultural and socioeconomic differences. It is unreasonable to assume that because a student is a certain race, they share the same or similar experiences within an institution. As the ecological perspective highlights, the microsystem encompasses the closest settings to the individual. The Black male's microsystem will consist of different environments than the Black females. These environments will also vary depending on the institution type. Private, public, predominately White, or historically Black institutions create their own distinct experiences for Black students. This research will focus on experiences of Black students at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). Hotchkins et. al. (2019) justified, "In looking at retention, there is the importance of increasing retention for historically underrepresented populations, and a movement away from the belief that there is one way to integrate all students on a college campus" (p. 29).

The intersectionality framework can be used to illustrate how the endpoints of privilege and oppression meet two of the axes, race and gender, and interact with school structures that were developed from viewpoints of White males (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2019). A researcher argued that women make up the majority of all students in college, but they are obligated to learn from the philosophies and concepts of higher-learning institutions designed by White men (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2019). Reviewing the experiences of Black males and

females separately will facilitate a strong backing for the relevance of this research study.

      **Black Female Collegiate Experiences.** Blacks are more likely than White students to be first-generation college students, and of that population Black female students had the highest first-generation rate (Zhang & Smith, 2011; Callan, 2018). This information coincides with Zhang and Smith (2011) research finding that "Blacks were more likely to have mothers and not fathers with college degrees" (p. 839). Although more Black women are graduating college there is limited research focused on this specific population (Callan, 2018). Callan (2018) elaborated, "College success of Black women are underexplored as much of the literature primarily points to deficiencies" (p. 4).

      Research focus for Black students is primarily on Black males. While this focus may be warranted based on the graduation and retention rates of that group, Black female college students are graduating less than White students. Black women when researched are categorized as Black or women and rarely disaggregated into their own subgroup (Rosales & Person, 2003). Winkle-Wagner (2015) explained, "The danger of disguising within-group differences is that Black women, and their experience, could be essentialized. As a consequence, many women may not receive the help they need" (p. 173). The *intersectionality of the Black women* is clearly described within the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw who coined the term (Kyoung Ro & Loya, 2015). She

effectively described the experience of a Black women through the neglect and discrimination they often face. Crenshaw (1989) stated,

> Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways similar to
> white women's experiences; sometimes they share very similar
> experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double-
> discrimination -the combined effect of practices that discriminate on the
> basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes they experience
> discrimination as Black women- not the sum of race and sex
> discrimination, but as a Black women. (p. 44)

The influences of race and gender may negatively impact Black female students. These occurrences are reflected within Black female retention and completion rates, as well as major selection and course of study. For instance, Black female students are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (McGee & Bentley, 2017). STEM scholars attest that "race of Blacks [is] a reason for their academic failure", and the societal racial hierarchy of mathematics places Blacks at the bottom while Whites and Asians are on top (McGee & Bentley, 2017). In a field dominated by men, Black women are challenged with "unwelcoming institutional climates, responses to impostor syndrome, racial stereotyping, lack of Black faculty, and high numbers of Black peers changing majors outside of STEM" (McGee & Bentley, 2017).

Within Callan's (2018) qualitative study, seven themes emerged related to factors that were attributed to Black first-generation females' persistence rates in

college. The themes included pre-collegiate resources that impacted the

women's college experience, the experience of completing the admission

process without help from their families, and the overwhelmingness of preparing

for and navigating college on their own. Callan (2018) wrote, "They also shared

that being a first-generation student was lonely because most of their peers were

often insensitive to challenges associated with not having a parent who

understood the rigors of college" (p. 117). The last four themes related to the lack

of financial support, the number of students in their classes that shared the same

race, the lack of community within the Black student peer group, and the weight

of having to succeed for their families. Callan (2018) explained, "Excelling in

college was not optional, as each had siblings and parents who were depending

on them to change the trajectory of their family's future" (p. 119).

Black female college students face several academic and social

challenges separate of those of Black males. Because Black female enrollment

rates are higher than Black males, it causes a negative impact on Black female

students' experiences (Callan, 2018). The disparity of Black student enrollment

requires Black female students to adjust socially, which could be the source of

isolation for some. More dedicated research centered around Black women and

the characteristics of the group could guide developing programming and policy

to increase college academic success. Researchers must begin to respect the

differences of Black women and men to effectively impact their path to

graduation. Winkle-Wagner stated, "The blind spot relative to African American

women's experiences in college could also be indicative of some students being mistreated during their experience" (p.172). Such experiences can be a direct result of the decreased likelihood to completion.

**Black Male Collegiate Experiences.** Black male students are the most at-risk population to not obtain a bachelor's degree. Almost 30% of Black males that enter college persist to graduation, which means that almost 70% that enter college do not graduate (Farmer & Hope, 2015). Researchers have attempted to comprehend the factors that imped the Black male students' success (Farmer & Hope, 2015; Hotchkins et. al., 2019; Jackson et. al., 2013; Williams & Flores-Ragade, 2010). Academic preparedness, parent's educational level, parental occupational status, parental support, finances, coursework, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are researched considerations (Jackson et. al., 2013). Researchers also suggest systematic and historical factors as important factors to evaluate when discussing Black males' student success. Hotchkins et. al. (2019) pronounced, "This is due to increases of students of color in higher education and history of systemic and institutionalized racism that allows for marginalization, failure, and lack of access and support for college students of color" (p. 29). Racial environmental stressors have affected Black male students, and they reported frequently experiencing microaggressions or subtle forms of bias and prejudices (Hotchkins et. al., 2019; Jackson et. al., 2013). Continued encounters of microaggressions can lead Black males to disengage, question their academic abilities (self-efficacy) or cause psychological distress (Jackson

et. al., 2013). Black male students may also seem academically disengaged because they struggle with balancing their social freedoms. Their focus may be on attracting females, exercising, partying, socializing with other Black males, playing video games, or spending time in the dormitories doing nothing (Farmer & Hope, 2015). Jackson et. al. (2013) reported that Black male students experience feelings of isolation, invisibility, contempt, and super visibility.

Black male students are conflicted with developing their identity and balancing their "societal and personal expectations" (Jackson et. al., 2013). Similarly, to Black females, gifted and highly achieved Black males must deal with the negativity of being labeled as "acting White" if they are successful academically (Jackson et. al., 2013). Black males of affluent families are afforded more pleasurable educational experiences than other Black male students (Jackson et. al., 2013). Black males' participation in student organizations assisted in their identity development, provided a space for co-curricular engagement, helped to racially uplift them and advocate for matters related race/ethnicity, "facilitated the development of cross-cultural communication skills, generated care for marginalized groups, and "instilled concern for social justice" (Farmer and Hope, 2015).

**Conclusion**

The growth of higher education and its culture is relying on the diversity of students and faculty. As discussed previously, creating a culture for students of color to excel is not only an academic issue but an ethical economic matter.

Fostering a culture for all students to learn is beneficial for students regardless of their race or ethnicity. Promoting the advancement of learning for all races and ethnicities establishes economic power for everyone. Investing in Black students' success by evaluating and eliminating barriers that are affecting their enrollment and persistence in college is an ethical issue that must be resolved. Assessing the entire higher education structure and attempting to rebuild its foundation would aid in the success of students that it was not originally created for. Implementing diversity trainings and hiring a chief diversity officer may slightly impact universities' hiring and admission practices, but to shift the culture of a university it will take intentional planning (Turner, 2002). The intention of this study is to address intentional planning in the areas of parental involvement, student support, and faculty representation.

Chester (2018) stated, "Change is in the air for higher education, and how this industry evolves over the next decade is very much in question" (p. 68). At the center of the change for higher education is the use of data linked to student success. Identifying dynamic partnerships within our campuses and other institutions that can transform culture is vital to continued educational reform. Analyzing data, identifying strengths and future foci, establishing goals, researching best practices, establishing tasks, responsibilities, and resources, implementing and continuing to monitor the processes are essential steps needed to change or improve the culture of higher learning institutions. Leaders should not rely on one source of data for making decisions (Eaker & Sells, 2016).

Eaker and Sells (2016) explained, "Obviously, data reports are necessary, but for the purpose of continuous improvement decision making is greatly enhanced by collaborative data analysis teams, conducted at multiple levels" (p. 99). Utilizing data related to students of color is imperative to move the needle to close the achievement gap. Often, universities review data without taking a deep dive into specific student populations. Some institutions remove or neglect to include race and ethnicity from reports to help not discriminate. In actuality, it is the highest form of discrimination by failing to recognize the differences of specific groups of students. Creating a culture shift by using data will require a team of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Although surveys may be helpful, providing interviews and focus groups with students will aid in universities and colleges' appropriate decision-making. Eaker and Sells (2016) justified the need for qualitative and quantitative data with this explanation,

> The learning data that teams examine need to be specific. Provosts, deans, department chairs, program heads, and others must dig deep into multiple forms of data, both quantitative and qualitative…This degree of specificity is fundamental to effectively focus improvement efforts and resources. (p. 100)

Changing culture is difficult in any organization. Higher education is no different. Fried (2011) stated, "Unless community is seen as value and a practice, addressing ethical dilemmas becomes a process of resolving conflicts among competing interests, with few if any agreed-on priorities and principles" (p. 106).

Two suggestions of how to approach ethical dilemmas on a college campus include focusing on dialogue and modeling behavior.

The campus community must be committed to dialogue and creating a framework to abide by. Dialogue is one of the most valuable pieces to understanding ethical dilemmas. Another suggestion to dealing with ethical dilemmas is that the campus community must model good behavior. As Fried stated, "Student affairs administrators help students learn ethical behavior, not by talking about it but by modeling it in conversation and behavior" (p. 106).

As Eaker and Sells (2016) stated, "To infuse goals with meaning, it is critically important that leaders link them directly to the organization's mission and vision at every opportunity" (p. 106). Black student success and hiring Black faculty must be embedded within the universities' mission and vision to produce adequate change. The retirement projections are favorable that more faculty positions will be available to help diversify higher learning institutions' faculty (Wood, 2008). Wood (2008) stated,

> Diversifying the professoriate means going beyond rhetoric and taking action. There are four key things that policymakers can do to in this regard, they can: 1) require institutions of higher education to infuse diversity-related objectives in their strategic plans in order to place morally motivated objectives of faculty representation at the forefront of all planning processes; 2) support policies that address ethical issues regarding the equitable treatment of all institutional faculty, students,

administrators, and affiliates in a non-racist and discriminatory fashion.
Much of the progress intended to increase faculty diversity is impeded by
direct or indirect forms of racism…3) set diversity goal that contain
timeframes to meet ethical and equitable bench markers. Policymakers
can publicly demand that these institutions make goals to increase racial
diversity. They can also require public universities to advertise recruitment
in certain publications to alert people of color to open positions; and 4) use
their fiscal influence to ensure that ethical diversity targets are reinforced
with funding restrictions and incentives in order to achieve desired goals.
(p. 5)

Higher learning institutions have an ethical obligation to recognize the history of
the United States educational system and to set actionable goals to rectify the
inequalities. Each institution should integrate diversity of students and faculty
within its mission and vision. Adding diversity to a mission and vision statement is
only the beginning. Institutional leaders and stakeholders must continue to push
the mission by communicating the goals to every level of the institution. It must
be repeated and held as a top priority. Creating a sense of urgency, providing
valuable resources, the quality of people that work for the organization, timing,
and the organization history/background factor into the challenge of re-culturing
(Eaker and Sells, 2016). Effective leadership is also imperative to help shift
culture. Eaker and Sells explained, "The ongoing cycle of continuous
improvement is driven by an intense and passionate focus on results" (pp. 123).

Research shows a positive relationship between faculty diversity and graduation

rates of students of color (Wood, 2008). "Thus, the lack of Black faculty in the

academy should be seen as an ethical dilemma, especially in consideration of

the barriers to equitable academic, personal, and social success of students that

are made more evident without the presence of these faculty", stated Wood

(2008). Continued focus on the right goals will help institutions solve the ethical

dilemma of Black student success.

    This review of literature used the ecological perspective to investigate race

and diversity in higher education, the factors that impact student success, and

the educational experiences of Black male and female students. As the

achievement gap continues to persevere, it is essential to disaggregate data to

understand the behaviors within the Black student population. The limited

literature focused on parental involvement and Black students in higher

education suggests there is an opportunity to gain more knowledge about the

relationship between families and students. The information gained will aid in the

creation of more effective interventions and programs for Black students, and

contributes to the purpose of this research study.

**CHAPTER III**

**Methods**

The purpose of this research was to analyze family involvement and the effect it has on academic success when comparing the biological sex (male/female) of Black students. This study collected information from students at Middle Tennessee State University. A description of participants, demographics, the survey instrument, data collection, and data analysis will be provided.

**Participants**

Participants for this study were Black undergraduates from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). MTSU enrollment in Fall 2020 was 22,080 students. Sixty-five percent of students were White, 18% Black, 7.4% Hispanic, 4.6% Asian, 3.9% two or more races, and American Indian, Pacific Islander and not specified combined for 1.1%. The student body is comprised of 46% male and 54% female. The average ACT score for incoming freshmen in Fall 2020 was 23.3 compared to the national average of 20.7.

Participants were recruited through email with an emphasis of recruitment on minority students. The study was open to students of all undergraduate classifications (freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior). There were 100 respondents, and 94 completed the entire survey. Ninety- three (93) were Black students, and one was Hispanic. There were 19 (20.4%) freshmen, 17 (18.3%) sophomores, 27 (29%) juniors, 26 (28%) seniors, and 4 (4.3%) graduate

students. Forty (43%) respondents were male and 53 (57%) were female. Eight

participants were new freshmen without college credit and no inclusive grade

point average. Three participants were graduate students without an

undergraduate inclusive combined grade point average. All other participants

completed college coursework to analyze the student's grade point average.

Approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Middle

Tennessee State University.

**Instrument (Family Involvement and Academic Success Questionnaire)**

The intent of this study was the impact of family involvement on collegiate

student success focusing on the difference between Black male and Black

female students. The online Qualtrics survey questionnaire consisted of three

parts, demographics, the Family Involvement Scale, and the academic success

assessment.

**Demographics.** The demographics section of the survey instrument was divided

into five sections:  academic influences, family structure, parents' education, and

student information. The academic influences section concentrates on the family

member or prominent person that was highly involved in the student's academic

collegiate career and ask questions about their behaviors related to the student's

academic journey. The following section is centered around the family structure

of the participant. It included questions about the student's living arrangements

during high school, the length of the parent's marriage, and how many hours a

week their parents worked. Lastly, students were asked to provide their personal

information which will include their name, race/ethnicity, biological sex, age,
number of semesters completed, and the age of the most significant person that
was involved in their academic career.

**Family Involvement Scale.** The survey instrument has 24 forced choice
questions using a 4-point Likert scale and 2 categorical yes/no questions.  The
scale consisted of two sections:  family involvement in high school and family
involvement in college.  The scale required participants to distinguish particular
behaviors and events that the most significantly involved family member
demonstrated during high school and college.  There are 14 items on the Family
Involvement in high school section.  The range for the total possible points for
this section will be from 14 (high involvement) to 56 (low involvement).  Items
exemplifying family involvement in high school included:

- Participating in parental organizations

- Volunteering at school functions

- Attending parent teacher conferences, open houses, social events,
  sporting events, and school board meetings

- Having a relationship with teachers and administrators

- Asked questions about classes and homework

- Provided encouragement and motivation

- Provided financial support

Related behaviors and events were used for the family involvement in college
section.  There are 10 items in this segment with a range for the total possible

points for this section of 10 (high involvement) to 40 (low involvement). This instrument included the following:

- Attended freshmen orientation

- Participated in parental college inaugurations

- Completed Partners in Education (PIE) form

- Attends sporting events

- Discusses classes

- Contacts regularly

- Inquiries about classes, homework, and professors

- Assists with homework or finding resources to help complete homework

- Encourages and motivates student to success in college

- Provides financial support

**Academic Success.** Academic success was measured by the participants' grade point average (GPA). The inclusive combined GPA was used to assess the student's academic performance. The inclusive combined GPA included Middle Tennessee State University, transfer college, and development level courses and grades. Participants gave consent to have their inclusive combined GPA utilized within the study. The student signed a consent form that gave the researcher permission to access their GPAs through Banner, PipelineMT, or Navigate for the purpose of this research.

**Data Collection**

The researcher contacted participants through email to complete the survey. The online survey consisted of a consent form, demographic questions, and family involvement scale. Students completed the consent form before moving into the next sections of the Family Involvement and Academic Success survey. The student's Middle Tennessee State University identification number was needed on the consent form to access student's GPA. Electronic signatures were collected on the consent form. The signature signified permission of their agreement to have the researcher retrieve the inclusive combined GPAs through Banner, PipelineMT, or Navigate for the purpose of the research. The survey took respondents 10 – 15 minutes to complete.

**Data Analysis**

Race, sex, first or second generation, and family involvement are the independent variables that were analyzed. The dependent variables were the student's inclusive combined grade point average and family involvement. The hypotheses were analyzed with SPSS using an independent t-test, chi-square test, and correlations.

The following hypotheses will be analyzed:

$H_1$: Academic achievement in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students.

H$_2$:  The amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differs from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions.

H$_3$:  Family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students' second-generation Black students.

H$_4$:  Family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions will be related to academic success in college.

Hypothesis one stated that academic achievement in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students. It was analyzed using an independent t-test. Hypothesis two stated that the amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differs from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions. It was analyzed utilizing an independent t-test and chi-square test.  Two categorical yes/no question were analyzed separately using a chi-square test. An independent t-test was also used to evaluate the third hypothesis; family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differs between first- generation Black students and second-generation Black students. The fourth hypothesis stated family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions will be related to academic success in college. This hypothesis was analyzed using correlations. Family involvement was converted to a categorical variable from continuous to complete

the chi-square test. Based on the participant's total score of the Family

Involvement scale, categorizations of high, medium, and low were created and

assessed.

**CHAPTER IV**

**Results**

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of family involvement on academic success among Black students in higher learning institutions. To do this, grade point average, classification, first-generation college student, second-generation college student, and family involvement in college was evaluated. The following research questions were examined in this study.

1. Does academic achievement in higher learning institutions differ between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students?

2. Does the amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differ from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions?

3. Does family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differ between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students?

4. Does family involvement of Black students in higher learning institutions correlate with student's GPA?

The study examined four research hypotheses using independent t-tests, correlations, and a chi-square test. The results of each hypothesis will be outlined in the following section.

**Nature and Analyses of Data**

Black students enrolled during the Fall 2021 semester at a PWI in Tennessee were included in this study. Initially, 100 students responded to the survey request over a period of 10 days. However, due to incomplete survey forms or failure to supply the information, only 93 students were used in the analyses of data. Four major research questions were addressed in this study from which four hypotheses were derived. Data were analyzed to determining whether to accept or reject these four hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1.** Academic achievement in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students.

The first hypothesis specified that academic achievement in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students. First and second-generation variables, as well as an inclusive grade point average variable was created. An independent t-test stated that the mean GPA for first-generation students (N=34) was 3.008, and the mean GPA for second-generation Black students (N=48) was 3.098. The statistical evidence does not support that academic achievement in higher learning institutions differs among first-generation and second-generation Black students, $t = -6.22$, $p = .535$. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that there is no difference between academic achievement among first- and second-generation Black students, at least as measured here. See Figure 1 (page 61) for an illustration of the range of inclusive grade point averages.

Figure 1

*Histogram of Respondent's Inclusive Grade Point Averages*
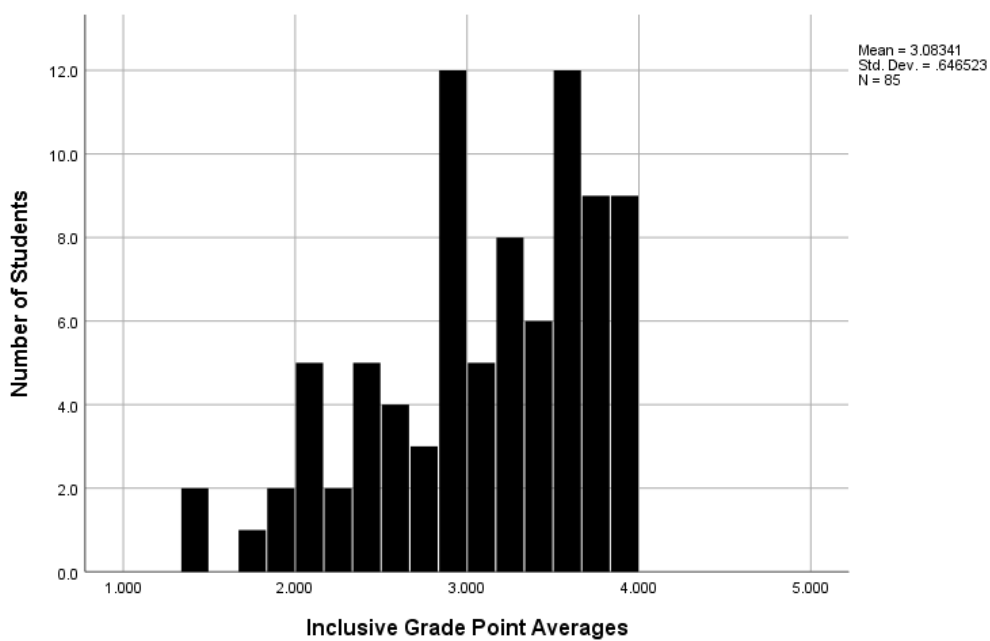


Note. This figure illustrates the range of inclusive grade point averages for respondents of the Family Involvement and Academic Success Survey, $M = 3.08$, $SD = .65$, N = 85.

**Hypothesis 2.** The amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differs from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions.

The second hypothesis stated that the amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differs from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions. An independent t-test was conducted with scores from the Family Involvement in College survey as

the dependent variable and gender as the independent variable. The statistical

evidence does not support a difference in Black female students

($M$ = 24.4, $SD$ = 7.1, N = 53) family involvement during college and Black male

($M$ = 21.8, $SD$ = 8.6, N = 40) family involvement while in higher learning

institutions, $t$ = -1.594, $p$ = .114.

A chi-square test was also conducted to examine the difference of the

amount of family involvement in higher learning institutions among Black

students. The Family Involvement survey was initially continuous variables, but

for the purpose of this test, the scores were transformed to categorical variables.

Categories included "high", "medium", and "low" based on the means of the

participants responses. "High Family Involvement" ranged from 10 to 19 with the

mean of 14.9. "Medium Family Involvement" ranged from 20 to 29 with the mean

of 24.9. "Low Family Involvement" ranged from 30 to 40 with the mean of 34.

Thirty – four students reported high family involvement while in college, 38

students reported medium family involvement, and 21 students conveyed family

involvement while in college as low. The same amount of Black male (n = 17)

and female students (n = 17) reported high family involvement while in college.

More Black female students reported medium (n = 23) and low (n = 13) family

involvement scores compared to Black male medium (n = 15) and low (n = 8)

scores. See Table 1 (page 63) for specific results of the categories. This

hypothesis was rejected suggesting that there is no difference between Black

female students' family involvement during college and Black male family

involvement while in higher learning institutions, $x^2$ = 1.079, *df* = 2, *p* = .583.

Table 1

*Summary of College Family Involvement Scores by Sex*
*(N = 93)*

|  | High | | Medium | | Low | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | n | % | n | % | n | % | N | % |
| Male | 17 | 50.0% | 15 | 39.5% | 8 | 38.1% | 40 | 43.0% |
| Female | 17 | 50.0% | 23 | 60.5% | 13 | 61.9% | 53 | 57.0% |
| Total | 34 | 100.0% | 38 | 100.0% | 21 | 100.0% | 93 | 100.0% |

*Note:* Chi Square = 1.079, *df* = 2, (*p* = .583)

     Two categorical yes/no questions were analyzed separately using a chi-

square test to evaluate family involvement. The first question asked if the most

highly involved family member/person (age range 21 – 79, N = 87) in their

collegiate career attended freshmen orientation. The statistical evidence supports

a difference in Black female and male students' families attending freshmen

orientation ($x^2$ = 120.032, *df* = 1, *p* = < .001). The second question asked

respondents if their highly involved family member/person in their collegiate

career completed a Partners in Education form. The statistical evidence supports

a difference in Black female and male students' families' participation in the

Partners in Education (PIE) program ($x^2$ =7.918, *df* =1, *p* = .005). Thus, this

hypothesis was accepted, suggesting that there is a difference in Black female

and male students' family involvement in the PIE program.

**Hypothesis 3.** Family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students' and second-generation Black students.

The third hypothesis stated family involvement of students in higher learning institutions differs between first-generation Black students' and second-generation Black students. An independent t-test evaluated the college family involvement scale as the dependent variable and the students' generational status as the independent variable. The independent t-test stated that the mean of the family involvement scale for first-generation Black students was 25.9 (SD = 7.8, N = 37), and the mean of the family involvement scale for second-generation Black students was 21.3 (SD = 7.5, N = 54). Statistical evidence supports that family involvement amongst these students in this higher learning institution differs between first-generation and second-generation Black students, $t = 2.850$, $p = .005$. Second-generation Black students were significantly more likely to have families involved in higher learning institutions.

**Hypothesis 4.** Family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions will be related to academic success in college.

The fourth hypothesis supposed that family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions will be related to academic success in college. The correlation disclosed that there is no significant relationship between family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions ($M = 3.083$, $SD = .646$, $N = 85$) and academic success in college, $r = -.58$, $p = .599$.

Another correlation was analyzed separately with the variables related to attending freshmen orientation and completing a PIE form. The statistical evidence does not indicate a relationship between completing the PIE form and academic success, r = -.060, $p$ = .588. The statistical evidence suggests a relationship between academic success and family involvement at freshmen orientation, $r$ = -.213, $p$ = .050, and a relationship between attending freshmen orientation and participation in the PIE program, $r$ = .268, $p$ = .013.

Overall, these data did not support that family involvement among Black students had a significant impact on student success. However, hypothesis two suggested there is a difference in Black female and male students that demonstrate family involvement by attending freshmen orientation or participating in the PIE program. Hypothesis three indicated that there is a difference in family involvement among first- and second-generation Black students. First-generation students have less family support than second-generation students, which may relate to several factors. Lastly, hypothesis four stated there are relationships found between attending freshmen orientation and academic success as well as a correlation between attending orientation and completing the PIE form. A further analysis of the study's results is discussed in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER V**

**Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to explore the effect of family involvement on academic success among Black students in higher learning institutions through a male and female comparison. Although all the hypotheses did not coincide with the results of the study, the findings provide information to guide future research related to family involvement and student success in higher learning environments. The following section will examine the results of the study, provide limitations, and suggestions for future research.

The first hypothesis stated that academic achievement in this higher learning institution differs among first-generation Black students and second-generation Black students. The results of the study concluded that first and second-generation Blacks achieve similarly in academics at the collegiate level. Research conducted by Froggé and Woods (2018) supported the findings of this study by examining first and second-generation students' characteristics and tendencies. The study results stated first-generation and second-generation students preferred face-to-face courses, first-generation students took a comparable number of hours to second-generation students, and had no statistically significant difference in GPA. Froggé and Woods (2018) did find that first-generation students work more hours off-campus, and there was a difference in the number of hours spent studying outside of class compared to second-generation students.

First-generation students often are less academically prepared for college, and thus have lower grade point averages than students with parents who obtained a degree. Federal and state governments, as well as colleges and universities, have recognized this issue and have compensated for the lack of preparation through bridge programs, early arrival programs, TriO Student Support Services grants and other initiatives. The institution utilized for this study has a history of success with these programs. Scholars Academy is one of the institution's thriving programs that began as a bridge program and evolved into a two-week early arrival program with a Freshmen Summer Institute (FSI). Henson's (2016) study focused on the Scholars Academy and its impact on students' GPA. He found that first-generation participants of the program had no significant difference in the average college GPA compared to non-participants. Henson (2018) explained, "The fact that Scholars Academy participants at least matched non-participants in average college GPA is noteworthy, as it would be expected they have a somewhat lower average college GPA had they not participated in the FSI program before college began" (p. 88). The involvement of such programs may impacted the results of this study, as many students may have participated in the study because they recognized the researcher's name as a director of the program. The importance of the relationship with the participants of the study and their participation in the Scholars Academy will be expounded on in the limitations section.

The second hypothesis analyzed that the amount of family involvement provided to Black female students differed from the amount of family involvement provided to Black male students in higher learning institutions. The findings showed that Black female and male students' amount of family involvement in college did not differ. These results are counter to Zhang and Smith (2011) who found that family involvement is different by gender related to a mother's support. Zhang and Smith (2011) stated, "Black females reported more discussion about useful information with their mothers than all groups, but only the difference between Black males and White males was significant (p < .10)" (p. 838). The results from the two questions related to specific behaviors that family members participated in support Zhang and Smith's (2011) findings. Black female and male family involvement is different in attendance at freshmen orientation and completion of PIE forms. Black parents may feel daughters are capable of navigating their experiences without as much support as their sons. Within the Black culture, women are taught to be strong and independent which may impact their parental behaviors toward college activities (Winkle-Wagner, 2015). This may also be linked to first-generation and less privileged parents. Hamilton et. al. (2018) explained, "Less privileged parents tended to leave academics up to their daughters" (p.122). In an interview with a less advantaged mother Hamilton et. al. (2018) emphasized the mother trusted that her daughter was "doing fine" and that she relied on her daughter to assist her with her homework for school. The daughter was on academic probation at the time of the interview due to the

daughter working 50 to 60 hours a week (Hamilton et. al., 2018). Hamilton et. al.

(2018) elaborated, "Most parents simply assumed their daughters were

managing well and hesitated to intervene" (p. 122).

The lack of intervention from parents may cause students to rely on

friends to become their largest support system. Zhang and Smith (2011) stated

that Black college students reported a greater amount of support from their

friends. In diverse families, friendships may closely resemble family. The term

family is defined differently within ethnic and cultural groups (Kiyama & Harper,

2018). Students may refer to family as non-biological members such as mentors,

family friends, or church members. Inclusive terms like "*cluster households*" and

"*fictive kinships*" explain the relationships held outside the nuclear family and

blood connections (Kiyama & Harper, 2018, p. 369). This representation is "a

cultural symbol of collective identity between different people" (Kiyama & Harper,

2018). Within diverse families, the collectivist identity (non-individualized norms)

does not exclude members by gender, thus the amount of family involvement

may be related to factors other than gender such as socioeconomic status.

The third hypothesis proclaimed that family involvement of students in

higher learning institutions differs between first- and second – generation Black

students. The study found that the amount of first-generation family involvement

is slightly different than that of second-generation Black students. Although, the

amount of family involvement is different; the mean of first-generation students

represented a "medium" level of involvement, while second-generation students

obtained a "medium" level of family involvement also. Family involvement and engagement was prevalent in both groups.

The final hypothesis stated that family involvement while Black students are in higher learning institutions will be related to academic success in college. This study found no relationship between family involvement, academic success, and Black student success in college. Zhang and Smith (2011) research supported these findings, and stated although Black mothers and fathers provided more help to their students, there was no significant evidence that it impacted the college GPA.

Several factors impact academic success. Jackson et. al. (2013) mentioned self-efficacy, spirituality, and financial resources as factors that impact Black male academic achievements. The influences most impactful to success in college may be factors that are directly affecting the student's daily life such as the physical spaces, people, and dynamics that affect their physical, mental, and social well-being while on a college campus. While family involvement has been shown to be directly impactful in elementary and secondary education, it could be due to students living with their parents or having frequent in-person contact with the most highly involved person. The physical family involvement in college is limited due to the geographical location which may alter the relationships of the microsystem and mesosystem. Johnson (2019) explained,

> The ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) could be used to explain
> this difference in terms of a shift of primary or influential groups within the

model. This thought may appear to be speculative, but many college students' interactions with peers are more frequent than interactions with family. In addition, students may be exposed to diverse attitudes and experiences as they have contact with others who come from different cities, states, countries and who have different cultural values. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory reinforces that behaviors, the environment, and student's cognition all factor into processing and learning of the individual. Therefore, as the influence of peers and/or friends in the college environment becomes more important, family influence may diminish somewhat" (p. 37 – 38).

At first glance, it could be assumed Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory did not support the findings of interrelationships (mesosystem) closest to the individual having an effect on college students. As mentioned above, it could be suggested that the relationships within the microsystem and mesosystem have changed for the individual upon their entry to college, and the level of family involvement is less but still supportive and may impact students in different ways. Callan's (2018) study interviewed Black students who were first-generation women indicated,

Study participants shared stories that exemplify a family structure with close family bonds and supportive environments. The women were fiercely protective of their parents, particularly those who were raised by single mothers. Participants were also determined to ensure that their

status as a first-generation student did not inhibit their ability to be

successful in college. Although study participants reported feeling

additional pressure, none indicated they felt unsupported by their families.

This finding is significant because it challenges the dominant narrative of

the lack of support first-generation and Black students received from their

families.

It is hypothetical, but possible, that the instrument was not sensitive enough to

clarify the differences assumed. Allowing participants to choose from a Likert

scale may prevented information. The lack of instrument sensitivity is

considerable since there was a statistical difference when administering yes/no

questions. Second, the participant pool may contribute as a factor for not finding

a significant difference. The study heavily relied on students to read their email.

High achieving students are more engaged and check their email frequently.

Students who are not highly engaged may check their email less and chose not

to participate in surveys. Also, without providing a compensation for participation

in the study underrepresented students may put work or other things as priorities

over completing an online survey. Lastly, this study measured academic success

as the inclusive combined GPA. Grade point averages are one component of

academic success; incorporating retention and graduation data may provide a

more comprehensive view of the relationship of family involvement and academic

success. More limitations of this study and suggestions of future research are

outlined in the next sections. It is important to note that although the research

results are not as presumed, the significance of learning about this population is valuable.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study had mentionable limitations. The data collection, time, and the respondent population are three highlighted below. Through the explanation of the three limitations clarifying the need for future research will become prominent.

This study was limited by the data collected from one regionally accredited, predominately White institution in the southern United States. Therefore, the results may not demonstrate the characteristics of students from other regions, countries, or institutions. Including a sample of students from other institution types such as historically Black colleges or community colleges may provide a broader perspective on family involvement related to college experiences (Johnson, 2009). Jackson et. al. (2013) reinforced this point by highlighting, "Although Black males are capable of assimilating into the college environment, those attending Predominately White Institutions (PWI) report less congruency between their pre-college high school/community life and their college experiences" (p. 6). Black males at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) experience a more compatible and inviting social environment (Jackson et. al., 2013).

The second limitation is the amount of time provided to collect data. The survey was initially sent to students the Friday of the week of midterms. Although

some students completed the survey within the weekend it was sent, there was a low response during the following week. There were four nudges of email lists to request participation in the survey. If time permitted, it is assumed more respondents would have completed the online survey.

Another limitation was no control of the random selection or of the number of students who participated in the study, and consequently there is no control of the student's family or educational background that was analyzed. Although, there was no control of the selection of the respondents, the researcher directs student success programs at the institution which may have impacted students who recognized the researcher's name and influenced their decision to participate in the study. The students who participated in student success programs may have more family involvement and institutional support, which may have factored into the student's academic success.

**Future Research**

Black student success is important in eliminating the achievement gap, thus there is a need for more research. Continuing to examine this specific group of students by disaggregating data will aid in understanding how to better serve them. Utilizing different research approaches, assessing socioeconomic status, reevaluating academic success, and within group similarities and differences are suggestions for future research.

A qualitative or a mixed methods approach may be helpful to gain more in-depth knowledge. Evaluating specific variables within the Family Involvement

and Academic Success survey that detail parental/family activities and their

relationship to student success could guide the direction of questioning for focus

groups or interviews of Black students. Interviewing students and their parents

about their behaviors may address specific traits that could hinder or facilitate

academic success. Brooms (2018) discussed the success of open-ended

interviews with 36 Black males related to Black male initiative programs.

Students recounted their comfort to speak and meet with other Black males

about campus experiences. These open and safe conversations made students

have a stronger sense of self and sense of belonging (Brooms, 2018). Cullaty

(2011) also utilized interviews and journal entries to assess parental involvement.

Although Cullaty's research was successful it lacked representation from

students and families of color. Callan (2018) expressed the need for more

research focusing on women of color. This study interviewed eight first-

generation Black women and examined their college experience and perception

of factors that contributed to their college persistence. Through an in-depth

qualitative investigation, seven (7) themes and 21 categories were found related

to resources, independence, college preparation and navigation, finances,

challenges within the Black student community, diversity, and the feelings of

carrying the future of their family on their back (Callan, 2018). Continuing to

examine Black students and the nuances of first and second-generation families,

family structure, family relationships, socioeconomic status, and family

educational perceptions may aid in understanding the value family involvement plays in post-secondary education.

There are several factors that impact academic success in higher learning institutions. This study focused on family involvement but didn't include factors that affect the students related to socioeconomic status. Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective offers an explanation why socioeconomic status can impact student's preparation and continuation through college. As mentioned previously, the macrosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem interconnected relationships affect students' learning experiences. A family's socioeconomic status, which relates to education, income, and occupation, directly impacts the neighborhood, school, and support services that create the experiences of students. A college student from a lower socioeconomic status family may have lower family involvement during college because the family members are working and providing resources critical to the survival of their family. Jackson et. al. (2013) mentioned that a main factor related to college selection and persistence is financial resources for Black males. Researching the relationship between family involvement, gender, and socioeconomic status could expose needs for students that have failed to be investigated.

Another suggestion for future research is to assess academic success through retention and graduation rates. Although the GPA is an indicator of academic success, the ultimate goal to closing the achievement gap is through graduating students. Investigating the impact on family involvement over the

collegiate life span of the student may provide more insight into parental

behaviors.

The final suggestion for future research is exploring the similarities and

differences within groups (Black females and Black males). As more minority

students enter into higher education, it is imperative that higher education

professionals learn how to best serve these diverse learners. Investigating

students who are enrolled as well as students who have stopped out can be

beneficial. Educators must recognize that grouping all students within one

subpopulation creates bias and unequitable predispositions. The intersectionality

framework highlights the difference within Black women, but is applicable to any

oppressed group. Researching Black males and Black females separately will aid

in better development of programs and curriculums. Callan (2018) advised,

"Additionally, programming that addresses the intersectionality of race and

gender should be developed" (p. 135). Participants within Callan's (2018) study

illustrated experiences that impacted both their race and gender.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of family involvement

on academic success among Black students in college. Although the results

were not what was expected, the outcomes provide opportunities for more

exploration related to Black student success in higher learning environments.

Jackson et al. (2013) stated,

> Colleges and universities should be fully and equally invested in the
>
> education pursuits of all students. Catering to the unique needs of a

diverse student population may enhance the experience and achievement

aspirations of the collective group. Administrative support and mentorships

have been found to be conducive to African American males' academic

achievements (Thomas et. al, 2011). Creating an egalitarian and

transparent environment will encourage Black males and other persons of

minority status to achieve at an optimal level.

Continuing to analyze Black students by disaggregating data will provide more

opportunities to create effective tools to better serve them. Utilizing different

research approaches, assessing socioeconomic status, and within group

similarities and differences are a few recommendations for future research. It is

imperative that more research and programs using an equity lens are developed,

implemented, and sustained for real change to occur within our educational

systems

REFERENCES

Atewologun, D. (2018). Intersectionality theory and practice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Business and Management, 1 – 20.* DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.48

Banks, T. & Dohy, J. (2019). Mitigating barriers to persistence: A review of efforts to improve retention and graduation rates for students of color in higher education. *Higher Education Studies, 9(1),* 118 – 131.

Bragg, D., Kim, E., & Barnett, E. (2006). Creating access and success: Academic pathways reaching underserved students. *New Direction for Community Colleges,135,* 5-19. DOI: 10.1002/cc243

Brayboy, B., Castagno, A., Maughan, E. (2007). Equality and justice for all? Examining race in education scholarship. *Review of Research in Education, 31,* 159-194

Brewer, C. (2020). 2020 Fact book: Office of institutional effectiveness, planning and research. Retrieved from https://www.mtsu.edu/iepr/factbook/Factbook_2020.pdf

Brooms, D. (2018). Exploring Black male initiative programs: Potential and possibilities for supporting Black male success in college. *The Journal of Negro Education. 87(1),* 59 – 72.

Callan, R. (2018). Black, female, first-generation college students:  Perceptions

of academic persistence. Retrieved from

https://www.proquest.com/docview/2049753979?pq-

origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true

Caruth, G. (2018). Student engagement, retention, and motivation:  Assessing

academic success in today's college students. *Participatory Educational*

*Research, 5(1)*, 17-30.

Chester, T. (2018). The IT-IR nexus: Three essentials for driving institutional

change through data and analytics. In Gagliardi, J., Parnell, A, &

Carpenter-Hubin, J, The analytics revolution in higher education (pp. 55 –

69). Sylus Publishing, LLC.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black

feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and

antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 140*, 139 – 167.

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K., & McCall, Leslie (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality

studies:  Theory, applications, and praxis. *Journal of Women in Culture*

*and Society, 38 (4),* 786 – 810.

Cullaty, B. (2011). The role of parental involvement in the autonomy development

of traditional-age college students. *Journal of College Student*

*Development, 52 (4),* 425 – 439.

Eaker, R., & Sells, D. (2016). *A New Way: Introducing Higher Education to Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.

Farmer, E. & Hope, W. (2015). Factors that influence African American male retention and graduation:  The case of Gateway University, a historically Black college and university. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 17(1),* p. 2 -17. DOI:  10/1177/1521025115571074

Fried, J. (2011). Ethical standards and principles. In J.H. Schuh, S. R. Jones & S. R. Harper (Eds.), Student services:  A handbook for the profession (pp. 96 – 119). Jossey-Bass.

Froggé, G. & Woods, K. (2018). Characteristics and tendencies of first and second-generation university students. *The College Quarterly, 21(2).*

Hamilton, L., Roksa, J., & Nielsen, K. (2018). Providing a "leg up":  Parental involvement and opportunity hoarding in college. *Sociology of Education, 91(2),* p. 111-131. DOI:  10.1177/0038040718759557

Harper, S. R., Smith, E. J., & Davis, C. H. F. (2018). A critical race case analysis of Black undergraduate student success at an urban university. *Urban Education, 53*(1), 3-25. DOI: 10.1177/0042085916668956

Henson, T (2018). The impact of a summer bridge program on first-generation college students. *ETD Collection of Tennessee State University.* https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/dissertations/AAI10787108

Hotchkins, B., Hotchkins, N., Bellot, B, & Parker, L. (2019). First year college

    student success for Black and other students of color:  A village initiative

    at the University of Utah. *Journal of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, and*

    *Leadership in Education, 4(1),* 28 – 31.

Jackson, J, Jackson, C., Liles, R., & Exner, N. (2013). The educated Black man

    and higher education. *Vistas Online.* P. 1 – 12.

Jeynes, W. (2017).  A meta-analysis:  The relationship between parental

    involvement and Latino student outcomes.  *Education and Urban Society,*

    *49(1), 4-28.*  DOI:  10.1177/0013124516630596

Johnson, B. (2009). *The affect of family involvement in academic success of*

    *higher learning institutions.* (Unpublished master's thesis). Middle

    Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN.

Johnson, B. (2019). The impact of family involvement on academic success in

    higher learning. *Journal of Student Success & Retention, 5(2),* 27 – 46.

Johnson, S. & Stage, F. (2018). Academic engagement and student success:

    Do high-impact practices mean higher graduation rates? *The Journal of*

    *Higher Education, 89(5),* 753 – 781.

Kiyama, J. & Harper, C. (2018). Beyond hovering: A conceptual argument for an

    inclusive model of family engagement in higher education. *The Review of*

    *Higher Education, 41(3), 365 – 385.* DOI:  10.1353/rhe.2018.0012

Kyoung Ro, H. & Loya, K. (2015). The effect of gender and race intersectionality

    on student learning outcomes in engineering. *The Review of Higher*

    *Education, 38(3), 359 – 396.* DOI: 10.1353/rhe.2015.0014

Larocca, R. & Carr, D. (2020). The effect of higher education performance

    funding on graduation rates. *Journal of Education Finance, 45(4),*

    493 – 526.

Lukianoff, G. & Haidt, J. (2019). The coddling of the American mind.

    Penguin Books.

McGee, E. & Bentley, L. (2017). The troubled success of Black women in STEM.

    *Cognition and Instruction, 35 (4),* 265 – 289.

    DOI: 10.1080/07370008.2017.1355211

Millea, M., Wills, R., Elder, A., & Molina, D. (2018). What matters in college

    student success?  Determinants of college retention and graduation rates.

    *Education, 139 (4),* 309 – 322.

Pinkney, A. (1969). The assimilation of Afro – Americans. The Black Scholar,

    *1(2)*, 36 – 46. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41202827

Redford, J & Hoyer, K. (2017). First-generation and continuing-generation

    college students:  A comparison of high school and postsecondary

    experiences Retrieved August 6, 2021, from

    https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018009.pdf

Rosales, A. & Person, D. (2003). Programming needs and student services for

   African American Women. *New Directions for Student Services, 104*,

   53 – 65.

Stout, R., Archie, C., Cross, D., & Carman, C. (2018). The relationship between

   faculty diversity and graduation rates in higher education. *Intercultural

   Education, 29 (3)*, 399 – 417. DOI:  10.1080/14675986.2018.1437997

Talbert, P. (2012). Strategies to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation

   rates. *Journal of Developmental Education, 36(1).* 22 – 36.

Thelin, J. & Gasman, M. (2011). Historical overview of American higher

   education. In J.H. Schuh, S. R. Jones & S. R. Harper (Eds.), Student

   services:  A handbook for the profession (pp. 3 – 23). Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (2005). Moving beyond access:  Closing the achievement gap in higher

   education [PDF file]. Retrieved from

   https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Vincent_Tinto2/publication/23849148

   6_Moving_Beyond_Access_Closing_the_Achievement_Gap_in_Higher_E

   ducation_1/links/571d595e08ae6eb94d0e512d/Moving-Beyond-Access-

   Closing-the-Achievement-Gap-in-Higher-Education-1.pdf

Turner, C. (2002). Diversifying the faculty:  A guidebook for search committees.

   Association of American Colleges & Universities. Retrieved from

   https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED465359.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center

    for Education Statistics. (2020). Retrieved April 10, 2021, from

    https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61

United States Census Bureau. Educational Attainment in the United States:

    2020. (2021).  Retrieved August 2, 2021, from

    https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/educational-attainment/cps-

    detailed-tables.html

Welbeck, R. & Torres, R. (2019). The male student success initiative:  Investing

    in the success of men of color. Retrieved from

    https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED599692.pdf

Williams, R. & Flores-Ragade, A. (2010). The educational crisis facing young

    men of color. Retrieved from

    https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/educational-crisis-

    facing-young-men-color

Winkle-Wagner, R. (2015). Having their lives narrowed down? The state of Black

    women's college success. *Review of Educational Research, 85(2),*

    p. 171 – 204.

Wood, J. (2008). Ethical dilemmas in African American faculty representation.

    eJournal of Education Policy. Retrieved from

    https://jlukewood.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/ethical-dilemmas-in-

    85frican-american-faculty-representation.pdf

Zhang, N. (2016). Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education

(5th edition). Charles C Thomas Publisher, LTD.

Zhang, P. & Smith, W. (2011). From high school to college:  The transition

experiences of Black and White Students. *Journal of Black Studies, 42(5),*

p. 828 – 845. DOI:  10.1177/0021934710376171

# APPENDIX A

**IRB**
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**
Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129
*FWA: 00005331/IRB Regn. 0003571*

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

### IRBN001 - EXPEDITED PROTOCOL APPROVAL NOTICE

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

| | |
|---|---|
| *Protocol Title* | ***The Impact of Family Involvement on Academic Success in Higher Learning Institutions: A Biological Sex Comparison of Black Students*** |
| *Protocol ID* | **22-2044 7q** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Principal Investigator* | **Brelinda Johnson** (Student) | *Faculty Advisor:* Donald Snead |
| *Co-Investigators* | NONE | |
| *Investigator Email(s)* | brelinda.johnson@mtsu.edu; Donald.snead@mtsu.edu | |
| *Department* | Womack Educational Leadership | |
| *Funding* | NONE | |

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU IRB through the **EXPEDITED** mechanism under 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110 within the category *(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior*. A summary of the IRB action is tabulated below:

| | |
|---|---|
| *IRB Action* | **APPROVED for ONE YEAR** |
| *Date of Expiration* | **10/31/2022**   *Date of Approval*: 10/12/21   *Recent Amendment*: NONE |
| *Sample Size* | TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY (250) |
| *Participant Pool* | *Target Population:*<br>    Primary Classification: **General Adults (18 or older)**<br>    Specific Classification: **Undergraduate Students** |
| *Type of Interaction* | ☐ Non-interventional or Data Analysis<br>☒ Virtual/Remote/Online   interaction<br>☐ In person or physical interaction – Mandatory COVID-19 Management |
| *Exceptions* | 1. Permitted to use academic performance records of the participating students<br>2. Online consent and online data collection via Qualtrics |
| *Restrictions* | **1. Mandatory SIGNED Informed Consent.**<br>**2. Other than the exceptions above, identifiable data/artifacts, such as, audio/video data, photographs, handwriting samples, personal address, driving records, social security number, and etc., MUST NOT be collected. Recorded identifiable information must be deidentified as described in the protocol.**<br>**3. Mandatory Final report (refer last page).**<br>**4. Not approved for in-person data collection** |
| *Approved Templates* | *IRB Templates:*  Informed Consent<br>*Non-MTSU Templates:*  Recruitment Email |
| *Research Inducement* | NONE |
| *Comments* | NONE |

## Post-approval Requirements

The PI and FA must read and abide by the post-approval conditions (Refer "*Quick Links*" in the bottom):

- ***Reporting Adverse Events:*** The PI must report research-related adversities suffered by the participants, deviations from the protocol, misconduct, and etc., within 48 hours from when they were discovered.
- ***Final Report:*** The FA is responsible for submitting a final report to close-out this protocol before **10/31/2022 (Refer to the Continuing Review section below)**; REMINDERS WILLNOT BE SENT. **Failure to close-out or request for a continuing review may result in penalties** including cancellation of the data collected using this protocol and/or withholding student diploma.
- ***Protocol Amendments***: An IRB approval must be obtained for all types of amendments, such as: addition/removal of subject population or investigating team; sample size increases; changes to the research sites (appropriate permission letter(s) may be needed); alternation to funding; and etc. The proposed amendments must be requested by the FA in an addendum request form. The proposed changes must be consistent with the approval category and they must comply with expedited review requirements
- ***Research Participant Compensation:*** Compensation for research participation must be awarded as proposed in Chapter 6 of the Expedited protocol. The documentation of the monetary compensation must Appendix J and MUST NOT include protocol details when reporting to the MTSU Business Office.
- ***COVID-19:*** Regardless whether this study poses a threat to the participants or not, refer to the COVID-19 Management section for important information for the FA.

## Continuing Review    (The PI has requested early termination)

Although this protocol can be continued for up to THREE years, The PI has opted to end the study by **10/31/2022** **The PI must close-out this protocol by submitting a final report before 10/31/2022** **Failure to close-out may result in penalties that include cancellation of the data collected using this protocol and delays in graduation of the student PI.**

## Post-approval Protocol Amendments:

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to implement minor and significant amendments that would fit within this approval category. ***Only TWO procedural amendments will be entertained per year*** (*changes like addition/removal of research personnel are not restricted by this rule*).

| Date | Amendment(s) | IRB Comments |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| NONE | NONE. | NONE |

## Other Post-approval Actions:

The following actions are done subsequent to the approval of this protocol on request by the PI/FA or on recommendation by the IRB or by both.

| Date | IRB Action(s) | IRB Comments |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| 10/19/2021 | A mistake in the PI's email address is corrected | Admin |

## COVID-19 Management:

The PI must follow social distancing guidelines and other practices to avoid viral exposure to the participants and other workers when physical contact with the subjects is made during the study.

- The study must be stopped if a participant or an investigator should test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of the research interaction. This must be reported to the IRB as an "adverse event."
- The MTSU's "Return-to-work" questionnaire found in Pipeline must be filled by the investigators on the day of the research interaction prior to physical contact.
- PPE must be worn if the participant would be within 6 feet from the each other or with an investigator.
- Physical surfaces that will come in contact with the participants must be sanitized between use
- **FA's Responsibility:** The FA is given the administrative authority to make emergency changes to protect the wellbeing of the participants and student researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the FA must notify the IRB after such changes have been made. The IRB will audit the changes at a later date and the FA will be instructed to carryout remedial measures if needed.

## Data Management & Storage:

All research-related records (signed consent forms, investigator training and etc.) must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol

application. The data must be stored for at least three (3) years after the study is closed.  Additional Tennessee State data retention requirement may apply (*refer "Quick Links" for MTSU policy 129 below*). The data may be destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity of the research subjects.

**The MTSU IRB reserves the right to modify/update the approval criteria or change/cancel the terms listed in this letter without prior notice**.  Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:
- Post-approval Responsibilities: http://www.mtsu.edu/irb/FAQ/PostApprovalResponsibilities.php
- Expedited Procedures: https://mtsu.edu/irb/ExpeditedProcedures.php
- MTSU Policy 129: Records retention & Disposal: https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/general/129.php

APPENDIX B

# Family Involvement and Academic Success Survey

---

Informed Consent. Thank you for agreeing to complete the Family Involvement and Academic Success Survey.  Please read the consent form carefully before completing the survey.  You will need to provide your signature at the end of the consent form.

 **IRBF024 – Participant Informed Consent (ONLINE)**

 **Information and Disclosure Section**

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project in which you have been invited to participate.  Please read this disclosure and feel free to ask any questions.  The investigators must answer all of your questions and please save this page as a PDF for future reference.
• Your participation in this research study is voluntary.
• You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time without loss of any benefits.

For additional information on your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Office of Compliance (Tel 615-494-8918 or send your emails to irb_information@mtsu.edu. (URL: http://www.mtsu.edu/irb).

Please read the following and respond to the consent questions in the bottom if you wish to enroll in this study.
 1. Purpose: This research project is designed to help us evaluate the impact of family involvement on academic success in undergraduate students.
 2. Description: There are several parts to this project.  They are: __4__

o You will need to complete a consent form.

o      Complete the Family Involvement and Academic Success Survey.

o      You will need to provide your MTSU identification number on this consent form so that I may access your grade point average (GPA).

o      Your signature gives permission for me to access your GPA through the university's student information system, solely for the purpose of this research.

o      The survey consists of demographic information as well as 24 questions about family involvement in high school and college.

o      The survey should take about 13 – 25 minutes.

3.      IRB Approval Details o      Protocol Title: __The Impact of Family Involvement on Academic Success in Higher Learning Institutions: A Biological Sex Comparison of Black Students__

o      Primary Investigator: Brelinda Johnson

o      PI Department & College: __College of Education__

o      Faculty Advisor (if PI is a student): __Donald Snead__

o      Protocol ID: 22-2044 7qv_Approval Date: 10/12/2021_Expiration Date: _10/31/2022__

4.      Duration: The whole activity should take about __13 - 30__ minutes/hours. The subjects must take at least _10 - 15___ minutes/hours to complete the study.

5.      Here are your rights as a participant:

•      Your participation in this research is voluntary.

•      You may skip any item that you don't want to answer, and you may stop the experiment at any time (but see the note below)

•      If you leave an item blank by either not clicking or entering a response, you may be warned that you missed one, just in case it was an accident. But you can continue the study without entering a response if you didn't want to answer any questions.

•      Some items may require a response to accurately present the survey.

6.      Risks & Discomforts: There are no discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks.

7.      Benefits:  a.      Benefits to you that you: The potential benefits to you from this
study are becoming aware of how your family and parental involvement has or
could influence your academic success while in college.

b.           Benefits to the field of
science or the community: The potential benefits from this study are the greater
understanding of the nature and impact of family involvement on academic
achievement.

8.      Identifiable Information: You may provide contact information for follow-up and
access of GPA solely for the purpose of this research.

9.      Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study

10.      Confidentiality. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal
information private but total privacy cannot be promised.  Your information may
be shared with MTSU or the government, such as the Middle Tennessee State
University Institutional Review Board, Federal Government Office for Human
Research Protections, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to
do so by law.

11.      Contact Information.    If you should have any questions about this research study
or possibly injury, please feel free to contact Brelinda Johnson by telephone 615-
494-7783 or by email Brelinda.Johnson@mtsu.edu OR my faculty advisor,
Donald Snead, at Donald.Snead@mtsu.edu and 615 -898- 5636.  You can also
contact the MTSU Office of compliance via telephone (615 494 8918) or by email
(compliance@mtsu.edu).  This contact information will be presented again at the
end of the experiment.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

a. **You are not required to do anything further if you decide not to enroll in this
study. Just quit your browser.  Please complete the response section below if you
wish to learn more or you wish to part take in this study.**

**Participant Response Section**

I have read this informed consent document pertaining to the above-identified research.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

b. The research procedures to be conducted are clear to me.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (4)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

c. I confirm I am 18 years or older.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

d. I am aware of the potential risks of the study.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

e. By clicking below, I affirm that I freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this study. I understand I can withdraw from this study at any time without facing any consequences.

○ Yes, I consent (1)

○ No, I do not consent (2)

---

Q1 Which parent of family member was the most highly involved in your academic life?

○ Mother (1)

○ Father (2)

○ Both (3)

○ Sibling (4)

○ Grandparent (5)

○ Aunt/uncle/cousin (6)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Q2 Was there any other person that was more highly involved in your academic life than a family member?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Q3 If you answered **yes** to the above question, **please answer the question below**. If you answered **no** to the above question, **please do not answer (skip) this question**.

Who was more influential in your academic life than your parents or family?

○ Teacher  (1)

○ Coach  (2)

○ Counselor  (3)

○ Family Friend  (4)

○ Church Member  (5)

End of Block: Academic Influences

Start of Block: Family Involvement in High School

Q4 Please choose the appropriate answer that correlates to the parent(s) or family member(s) that is most highly involved in your academic life.

_____ was/were involved in my high school education career.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q5 _____ attended parent teacher conference every year.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q6 _____ attended open houses and social events at my high school.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q7 _____ participated in a parental organization at my high school.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q8 _____ volunteered at school functions.

○ Always (1)

○ Frequently (2)

○ Sometimes (3)

○ Never (4)

---

Q9 _____ had a relationship with my teachers and administrators at my high school.

○ Always (1)

○ Frequently (2)

○ Sometimes (3)

○ Never (4)

---

Q10 _____ attended school board meetings.

○ Always (1)

○ Frequently (2)

○ Sometimes (3)

○ Never (4)

---

Q11 _____ attended school sporting events.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q12 _____ asked me questions concerning my class work and homework.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q13 _____ helped me with my homework.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q14 _____ encouraged and motivated me to do my best in high school.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q15 _____ and I discussed the classes that I should take in high school.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q16 _____ provided financial support during high school.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q17 I worked hard in high school because of the expectations my _____ set for me.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q18 Please choose the appropriate answer that correlates to the parent(s) or family member(s) that is most highly involved in your academic life.


_____ is/are involved in my collegiate career.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q19 _____ participates in a parental organization at my college.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q20 _____ and I discuss the classes that I should take in college.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q21 _____ contacted me to discuss classes and school events.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q22 _____ asked me questions concerning my class work, homework, and professors.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

Q23 _____ attended school sporting events.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q24 _____ helped me with homework or finding resources I need to complete my homework.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q25 _____ encouraged and motivated me to do my best.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q26 _____ provided financial support during college.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q27 I worked hard in college because of the expectations my _____ set for me.

○ Always  (1)

○ Frequently  (2)

○ Sometimes  (3)

○ Never  (4)

---

Q28
Please answer **Yes** or **No** to the following statement.
_____ attended freshman orientation.

○ Yes  (1)

○ No  (2)

---

Q29
Please answer **Yes** or **No** to the following statement.
_____ completed a Partners in Education (PIE) form.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

---

Q30 What is the age of the person that is mostly highly involved in your academic career?

_____

End of Block: Family Involvement in College

Start of Block: Family Structure and Parent's Education

Q31 Did you live with a biological parent during high school?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

---

Q32 If you answered **yes** to the above question, **please answer questions 32 - 33** and **skip question 34**.  If you answered **no** to the above question, **please answer question 34 and skip questions 32 - 33.**

32. Which parents did you live with during high school?

○ Mother only  (1)

○ Father only  (2)

○ Mother & Father  (3)

○ Mother & Step Father  (4)

○ Father & Step Father  (5)

---

Q33 33. How long were your parents married?

○ 0 - 5 years  (1)

○ 6 - 10 years  (2)

○ 11 - 15 years  (3)

○ 16 - 20 years  (4)

○ 20 years or more  (5)

Q34 34. Who did you live with while in high school?

○ Grandparent/Grandparents  (1)

○ Aunt/Uncle  (2)

○ Sibling  (3)

○ Foster Parent  (4)

○ Cousin  (5)

○ Other  (6)

---

Q35 Thinking about your parent/caretaker who was most highly involved in your academic career, how many hours a week did they work?

○ 0 -10 hours  (1)

○ 11 - 20 hours  (2)

○ 21 - 30 hours  (3)

○ 31 - 40 hours  (4)

○ 41 or more hours  (5)

---

Q36 How many years of education did your mother receive?

○ 0 - 6 (Elementary)  (1)

○ 7 - 12 (High School)  (2)

○ 13 - 16 (Bachelor's Degree)  (3)

○ 17 or more (Advanced Degree)  (4)

Q37 Did your mother receive a degree from a four-year institution (college/university)?

○ Yes  (1)

○ No  (2)

○ Not Sure  (3)

Q38 How many years of education did your father receive?

○ 0 - 6 (Elementary)  (1)

○ 7 - 12 (High School)  (2)

○ 13 - 16 (Bachelor's Degree)  (3)

○ 17 or more (Advanced Degree)  (4)

Q39 Did your father receive a degree from a four-year institution (college/university)?

○ Yes  (1)

○ No  (2)

○ Not Sure  (3)

End of Block: Family Structure and Parent's Education

Start of Block: Demographic Information - Please complete following:

Q40 First Name Initial

_____

Q41 Last Name

_____

Q42 MTSU Identification Number (M#), only include numbers.

_____

Q43 Age

_____

Q44
Race/Ethnicity

○ American Indian or Alaska Native  (1)

○ Asian  (2)

○ Black or African American  (3)

○ Hispanic or Latino  (4)

○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  (5)

○ White or Caucasian  (6)

Q45 Sex

○ Male  (1)

○ Female  (2)

○ Prefer not to say  (4)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Q46 Classification

○ Freshman  (1)

○ Sophomore  (2)

○ Junior  (3)

○ Senior  (4)

**End of Block: Demographic Information - Please complete following:**