

2021

Success Strategies of Persistence for Black Male Community College Students

Alvenetta Chyrisse Wilson
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Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Alvenetta Chyrise Wilson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Success Strategies of Persistence for Black Male Community College Students

by

Alvenetta Chyrisse Wilson

MEd, Lamar University, 2013

BS, University of Houston, 1982

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

This project study addressed the problem of low persistence of Black men in community college. A southeast Texas community college study site implemented a mentoring program specific to Black men in 2013 following a data report from The Achieving the Dream program. Although the mentoring program had been implemented with progress, there were no student data captured to substantiate the program's existence. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify success strategies used by Black male community college students who persist to graduation attainment. The conceptual framework driving this research is Deci and Ryan's self-determinant theory of intrinsic motivation. Three research questions were posed to investigate what Black men at the college perceive as critical influences on persistence based on their college experiences, challenges or barriers, and motivating strategies to persist for successful outcomes. Ten Black men were recruited from the former Black male mentoring program, current mentoring programs, and the general population. Qualitative data were collected through an interview process, data were transcribed, and results were manually analyzed with codes and themes for the study's findings. Key results were that Black male college students who are highly motivated, exercise effective time management skills, and engage with faculty, mentors, and peers tend to persist in college. The conclusion was that intrinsic motivation plays a significant role in student persistence and success. From this study, a professional development workshop was developed to help the Black male population persist. This study could lead to positive social change by increasing Black male persistence rates in community college.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my mother, brother, son, and grandson. For all the countless hours that I have been working on this study, away from family time, you have been my motivation to persist. I champion my mother, Marvene, our family matriarch, and an education administrator, for planting the seed of education and higher education in our immediate family. With your encouragement and following in your footsteps, education has always been a priority in our family. My lineage stems from a family of educators from the early 1900 decade.

Special dedication goes to my son, a young Black male, for inspiring me to provide success strategies for Black male college students. Although my son attended community college as a student-athlete, then graduated from a Tier One university as a student-athlete, he inspired me to be inquisitive of other Black male students who may not have had the opportunity and family support that was given to him. This inspiration led to my project study title knowing that successful Black male students exist and need to be positively reimaged despite the deficit research, and negative stereotypes and media display on this population of men.

To all Black men seeking higher education, persistence to graduation is essential in helping find your voice in life and in your community. As a professor at a community college, it is important for me to see more Black male students receive the necessary mentoring and rapport with educators who encourage persistence. I am so proud of the 10 Black male students that I interviewed for this project study.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my family, friends, and relatives who have encouraged me along this journey. I could not have completed this journey without your support. Moreover, I must recognize my Faculty Mentor and Committee Chairperson, Dr. Nancy Walters, for her outstanding guidance, availability, patience, and positive feedback. Also, I want to acknowledge my 2nd member chair, Dr. Dimitrios Vlachopoulos, and University Research Reviewer, Dr. Rollen Fowler, for supporting my study. Without my team, I would not have had the persistence to endure this long journey. Again, thank you.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem of persistence for Black men continues to exist across community colleges, including the study site for this research project. Despite enrolling in community colleges, Black male students often have unsuccessful experiences (Harper, 2012). The problem that compelled this study was the continuing low persistence rates of Black men attending a 2-year, degree-granting institution. There exists a gap in practice of Black male success strategies for persistence at the local study site. This gap is consistent with research literature for Black men in community college (Beale et al., 2019; Harris & Wood, 2013). Gaps exist in research regarding Black male student success strategies focused on improving persistence (Freeman & Huggins, 2009; Harris & Wood, 2013; Ingram et al., 2016). To address the low persistence rate issue, the study site, a southwestern community college in Texas, launched a mentoring program explicitly targeting success for Black men. According to a former program leader at the study site, leaders there endeavor to bridge the Black male persistence gap by closely examining the population's needs and requests as they matriculate.

As evidenced by the college's attainment statistics in 2016, Black male students' graduation rates were low. For students to be considered a graduate, they must do so within 3 years of enrollment. At the study site, the 2016 graduation rate for a 3-year enrollment period, excluding transfers, was 10.1% (21/208) for Black students (non-Hispanic). In comparison, their counterparts graduated at higher rates from the same community college: Hispanic students, 22.37% (306/1,368), White students, 22.58%

(177/784), Others, including Pacific Islander students, 36.36% (4/11), and Asian students, 21.48% (29/135). Although the study site had an established underrepresented mentoring program that increased persistence and graduation rates for Black men in recent years, Black men still have a low persistence rate and poor success outcomes consistent with national statistics. The 2016 graduation rate nationally for a 3-year enrollment period was 23% for Black students (non-Hispanic). In comparison, their counterparts graduated at higher rates from community college: Hispanic students, 30%, White students, 32%, Other, including Pacific Islander students, 34%, and Asian students, 36% (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [IPEDS], 2016).

A community college's role is to provide a safe, affordable, and supportive environment that promotes student success and workforce preparation for all students (Community College Research Center [CCRC], 2019). For students to succeed in the college environment, social integration and collaboration with college personnel underlie their persistence (Clark et al., 2014; Tinto, 1975, 1988). Students who are motivated and committed have a better chance to ensure their success and to fulfill the institution's role. Tinto (1988) posited that the higher a student's level of commitment to the higher education institution, the more likely the student would persist.

The Achieving the Dream program is a national reform network supported by the private sector and community colleges to promote success via best practices of retention and achievement (Johnson et al., 2015). In 2006, the Achieving the Dream program examined Black men's success rates at the study site and revealed the low persistence and success rate data for the Black male students. To address the underlying issues, leaders at

the community college study site launched a mentoring program for Black male students. According to a research administrator at the study site, the data from the Achieving the Dream program concerning the Black male students on the campus indicated a clear and significant difference between Black male student success and all other students enrolled at the college. Black male students lagged behind all other racial and ethnic groups in course success, persistence rates, and graduation rates. Using this internal data, a mentoring program was developed in 2013, specifically for Black men. As stated by a study site administrator, the program initially experienced success as a viable program to assist Black men but could not benchmark its success. Although the young black men in the mentoring program initially displayed increased persistence, the program changed direction in 2019 due to challenges experienced by its growth, and the program did not have student data to corroborate results and substantiate its existence, stated the study site administrator. With growth and increased responsibilities, the program staff experienced challenges, affecting each campus's programming and logistics. Other challenges included students' lack of engagement and motivation because of family, work, and other issues. Moreover, the study site administrator affirmed that the successful students were often those who needed less support than others in the program. These challenges all contributed to revamping the program.

The study site leaders revamped the Black male student mentoring program with a new direction to include students of diverse backgrounds. According to a document from the study site, the new program's primary objective is for students, staff, and faculty to serve as mentors to encourage and support underrepresented students' diversity and

culture. The new program leaders have conducted workshops and have committed to working on fully engaging the diverse populations. According to a former program leader, although Black men still lag in success rates, Black male persistence rates increased at the study site after the original mentoring program's onset. Although colleges and other institutions have made some progress in supporting Black male students' persistence, the research site administrator observed that a persistence gap remains for these students compared to other groups. According to a document from the study site, in the 2018 fall-fall school year, Black males' persistence rates were at 49.2% compared to Hispanics at 65.5%, and Whites at 80.2%. The research administrator expressed that there is nothing specific that the college is not doing to improve the success rates. According to another document from the study site, the new program provides a haven for diverse students to learn about life, school, barriers, goals and develop a sense of belonging with bonding and growth toward fulfilling their purpose.

To move forward with a revamped program that addresses persistence gaps, a study site administrator sought to ascertain the former program's issues that impeded program success from the student's perspective. The study results can benefit the new program because the aim included uncovering barriers that Black male students faced in the former program, other mentoring programs, and those of the general population. According to the study site administrator, there were no formally captured student interview data from the original Black male student mentoring program, and program leaders recognized the need for improvements, such as student engagement and motivation.

In this study, my goal was to investigate the persistence issue by collecting data from former students enrolled in the former Black male student mentoring program, Black male students participating in the new mentoring program, and Black male students in the general population. Furthermore, I addressed the persistence gap in practice at the study site by identifying Black male student success strategies. Addressing this issue and collecting needed data may assist Black male students with the motivation to persist and fill a gap in practice at the study site.

The Larger Population

Black male students have the lowest degree attainment at community colleges nationally (Beale et al., 2019; Harper, 2012; Harris & Wood, 2013; Ingram et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2015). Black male student persistence is a significant concern locally as well as nationally. Wood and Harris (2015) found that only 12% of Black men graduated from a community college in 3 years. Findings from Urias and Wood (2014) showed that 11.8% of Black men in 2-year colleges had left for various reasons after the first year of enrollment and had no plans to return. By Year 2, 39.6% had left without returning or were no longer enrolled 6 years later (Urias & Wood, 2014). Black men in Texas postsecondary institutions have faced similar challenges as Black men nationally; these challenges include financial limitations, family obligations, social community status, location, degree and career aspirations, and the institution's characteristics (Wood & Harris, 2015). Although open admission takes the pressure off students enrolling in community colleges, only about a third of undergraduate students are enrolled in community colleges (Pratt, 2017).

The Black male population can have challenges regarding degree attainment because they experience considerable and multifaceted barriers that have a negative impact on their success. The barriers include low teacher expectations, student unpreparedness, racist and culturally unresponsive campus environments, and low student performance (Harper, 2012; Wood et al., 2016). Other barriers to degree attainment have included unsuccessful experiences, disconnectedness, and feelings of not belonging to higher education institutions (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Goings & Shi, 2018; Harper, 2012). Although some results on Black male challenges have negatively portrayed Black men attending community college due to low degree attainment percentages, some of these students have overcome barriers and successfully persisted in degree attainment (Beale et al., 2019; Harper, 2012).

Black men have been labeled in education as at risk because society deems they are too aggressive, too loud, too violent, or too focused on sports (Goings et al., 2015). As a result of the negative stereotypes perpetuated by research and college communities, much of the external peer support that Black men have received conveys these negative messages about their potential rather than offering success strategies (Davis, 2014). Educators have often placed Black male students in special education or developmental classes that do not adequately prepare them to persist and eventually succeed. The unpreparedness can lead students to have low motivation, lack of confidence, and students might experience continuing negative messages from others (Davis, 2014; Harper, 2012). Moreover, these deficit teaching models that label Black men have been reinforced in media, research journals, and educational practices (Harper, 2012). Fueled

by myths and beliefs of attaining self-fulfillment through personal accomplishments and access to freedom, the "American Dream" is held up as unachievable for Black boys and men (Beale et al., 2019). Society has stereotyped these men according to their perceived challenges rather than positive qualities and persistence (Beale et al., 2019; Harper, 2012; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2015). In contemporary times, the portrayal of Black boys and men as troublesome is consistent with social science literature and has recently caused protests and cultural action by social movements such as Black Lives Matter and Ferguson Action (Beale et al., 2019). Moreover, cultural action spawned from negative portrayals and protests has initiated equity and implicit bias awareness for the underrepresented population in higher institutions, including the study site.

In this study, I focused on the persistence strategies supporting the success of Black men. Degree attainment for successful Black male students is partly attributable to personal attributes and intrinsic motivation to succeed (Boatman & Long, 2018; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hayes et al., 2006). Previous researchers such as Bean and Metzner (1985), Harper (2012), and Tinto (1993) have studied the decline of Black men's enrollment in colleges and emphasized the lack of attention on their attributes as part of understanding these students' persistence. Moreover, descriptive and detailed reporting on the lived experiences of Black men at 2-year institutions is almost nonexistent in educational research (Ingram et al., 2016). More studies are needed to identify Black male students who have succeeded and the personal attributes they possess (Land et al., 2014). In practice, attention to positive characteristics is advantageous to Black male students' persistence in college (Beale et al., 2019; Bratton, 2018). Positive attributes and intrinsic

motivation may play a pivotal role in Black men's persistence and academic success in community college.

Although Goings et al. (2015) found an increasing number of initiatives aimed at successful educational outcomes for Black male college students, the application of successful persistence strategies requires further research. The National Center for Education Statistics (Kena et al., 2015) reported some focus on persistence toward degree attainment at the community college level for Black male students who struggle. More research studies are needed to precisely identify factors that facilitate college persistence among Black males (Anumba, 2015; Beale et al., 2019). Thus, it is essential to know how Black men can succeed by researching persistence.

Community colleges enroll nearly half of all undergraduates in the United States (Anumba, 2015). Choosing the most appropriate higher education institution can be daunting for students as they exit high school. Choosing the appropriate institution can have implications for the students' level of success when persisting (Harper, 2012; Stewart et al., 2015; Wood & Harris, 2015). However, if students attend the institution of their choice, then the chances of becoming motivated to persist and graduate increase partly due to feeling some control over their destinies.

Many students do not enroll in college to obtain an associate degree; many seek professional training (Pratt, 2017). Certifications for specific employment, lower costs, and higher education entry have been the typical reasons for a community college enrollment (Pratt, 2017). When students enroll without considering traditional graduation, success strategies could be encouraging because some community college curriculums

offer stackable courses leading toward a certificate and degree. The stackable courses can support degree attainment. Degree attainment consists of receiving a certificate or receiving an associate degree. Thus, the study site leaders consider certificate completion to count in the degree attainment rate. Once Black male students learn how to navigate the college environment by being socially and academically equipped with evidence-based success strategies, graduation chances may become more of a possibility.

Pratt (2017) and Tinto (2016) shared the same framework for persistence. Pratt, like Tinto, found that institutional actions led to students' pondering about a decision between dropout and persistence. In Pratt's study (2017), students were faced with dropout decisions because the institution did not provide transparent information about expectations prior to their arrival on campus. Tinto (2016) found that Black men's persistence in higher education institutions has been mainly researched through the lens of institutional actions to promote retention. However, Tinto's (1975, 1988) models of student departure focused on students' campus and social interactions as contributors to their persistence. Tinto posited that higher education institutions' interest is to increase graduation and the student's intent is to complete a degree without regard to the institution in which it is earned. According to Tinto (2016), the two perspectives are different. The student's perspective should be considered to increase persistence rates. Students need to know what to expect from institutions to avoid dropout decisions that may affect their persistence. There must be common ground between students and institutions, such that students are better informed of expectations and supported in a welcoming atmosphere.

In most cases, the institution is not attached to individual students because its more significant concern is increasing student enrollment funding. Alternatively, students, particularly Black male students, need to feel a sense of attachment and belonging to their higher education institutions to persist and succeed (Davis, 2014). Black students overall feel a greater sense of self-determination when acknowledged and appreciated by faculty and administrators (Watts-Martinez, 2015). Creating a more welcoming atmosphere can have a positive impact on the persistence of Black men.

Because Black men have emerged as low persistent students, male mentorship might support this population in achieving degree completion. Black men have begun to participate in college initiatives to increase their persistence and success rates (Beale et al., 2019; Goings et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2015). Mentors can help eliminate barriers by offering collaborative and innovative leadership to create conducive learning environments that support Black men. Mentorship for Black male students is crucial (see Beale et al., 2019) as they connect with leaders, fellow students and reinforces a sense of belonging due to the welcoming environment. Students who participate in a mentoring program have an increased chance of staying in school, and thus, increasing their chances of feeling included in the university's culture (Brooks et al., 2013). As these students connect with leaders and fellow students, they can learn how to navigate barriers to achieve degree completion. Role modeling and peer support play integral roles in increasing persistence and success as well as mentoring (Allen et al., 2006; Beale et al., 2019; Davis, 2014). Mentoring programs, role-modeling, and peer support are useful in assisting Black males with persistence and success.

Role modeling and peer support for Black men make it possible for them to bond, share lived experiences, and engage in social networking activities outside the classroom. These activities could decrease attrition and improve graduation rates for the student group under study (Beale et al., 2019). When headed by Black male leaders, these initiatives are known to unite Black male students in comfortable spaces where they validate each other's experiences, seek and share advice, and discuss issues and topics of interest relevant to Black men (Harper, 2012). Creating interactive collaborations conducive to leadership helps build confidence and meaningful success for students as they persist.

Rationale

This project's study site has low persistence rates for Black male students consistent with national rates. My goal for this qualitative study was to identify successful persistence strategies used by Black male college students who accomplished educational persistence or attainment. Because the community college study site does not have data from Black male students involved in a specific program for Black men, I sought to pinpoint the issues and problems associated with Black male persistence.

The findings related to success strategies could serve as interventions to ameliorate Black men's low persistence and graduation rates at this project's study site. Hearing voices of Black male students who manage themselves with autonomy, competence, and a sense of connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985) could uncover strategies for overcoming low degree completion rates. Focusing on intrinsic motivational supports

that have enabled some Black male students to persist could help other Black male students obtain a degree.

A former program leader of the original mentorship program at the study site indicated decreasing persistence rates before program initiation. The former program leader added that Black male students lack the consistency of knowledge and strategies on how to succeed in community college. The former program leader indicated that the persistence and graduation rates improved after the students internalized the information received from the program. The former program leader also expressed that the students tended not to have a clear direction and did not want to seek assistance. Although student outcomes were not documented clearly, attempts were made to assist Black men via the original mentorship program, which offered contextualized learning, social engagement, and advanced skills to help students succeed. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify success strategies that support persistence relative to Black men. Student interviews that document the lived experiences could be beneficial in assisting Black men with persistence and uncovering student data to assist the institution.

In this study, I used insights from the participants' interviews to compile information on barriers that future students should avoid. The low number of Black men who graduate locally and in the larger population of community colleges was a significant focus of this study. Community colleges could use the project results regarding Black male students' successful strategies to combat the low persistence rates of Black male community college students. Black men are the least likely to persist until

graduation (Anumba, 2015). Black men must become familiar with barriers that prevent them from furthering their education in order to persist to degree attainment.

In this project study, I addressed the problem of low persistence of Black males in community college. I sought to improve persistence by learning how and why Black men were academically successful despite barriers, rather than how and why they have failed. The achievement of Black men in community college is not well documented and published in literature that examines their persistence rates and academic success (Davis, 2014; Harris & Wood, 2013). I sought instructive perceptions from engaged student achievers who performed well and maximized their college experiences (Harper, 2012). To ameliorate the local gap in Black male success strategies, there needs to be an understanding of what experiences are perceived as barriers as well as enablers for students at the institutional level. I used Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination model (SDT) to identify Black male persistence and successful strategies that students can use and the institution can adopt.

Definition of Terms

Key terms are those used explicitly throughout this project study. The terms outlined below have a unique meaning to this project study's context, essential for a common understanding between the researcher and the audience.

Academic success: Academic success is defined as the resilience and successful adaptation in the face of social disadvantage (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013).

Academic success strategies: These are strategies used to attain outcomes specific to educational experiences (York et al., 2015).

Antideficit: This model is a strengths-based approach for understanding how Black males have managed to experience success in overcoming barriers in higher education (Harper, 2012).

Autonomous motivation: This construct is defined as a person's choice to be self-directed and have the need to feel ownership of their behavior (Wang et al., 2019).

Black/African American: These are persons with origins in any of Africa's Black racial groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Graduation rate: Graduation rates are calculated as percentages of students who graduate or complete their program within a specified timeframe. (Ginder et al., 2016; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [IPEDS], 2016).

Intrinsic motivation: This is the specific motivation of an individual to choose to engage in an activity for its own sake, whether for interest, pleasure, or satisfaction (Wang et al., 2019).

Persistence: This term describes students who remain enrolled in a postsecondary organization, specifically the community college, until a degree is completed (Hall, 2017).

Retention rate: The percentage of first-time undergraduate students who return to the same institution the following fall (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [IPEDS], 2016).

Self-determination theory (SDT): This theory contains the concept that human nature includes the propensity for curiosity about an environment and interest in learning and developing knowledge (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

Self-efficacy: This is a person's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce a specific performance level (Bandura, 1993).

Significance of the Study

Understanding the stories and experiences of successful Black men in community college is critical as they represent a small population of college completers. In this study, I examined Black men's experiences as they navigated barriers to persist in their degree attainment. Moreover, there is a lack of documentation and published literature examining persistence rates and Black men's academic success in community college (Davis, 2014; Harris & Wood, 2013).

Most of the research findings on Black men in higher education have not been focused on the community college setting. Instead, the focus has been on 4-year universities (Wood et al., 2016). Moreover, Black men's academic success has been mainly documented in dissertations with minimal citations in peer-reviewed journal articles (Davis, 2014). This study's results could add value to literature as it focuses on the antideficit approach to understanding how Black men succeed rather than how they have not succeeded.

The outcomes of this study have the potential to contextualize intrinsic motivation for the persistence of Black male students based on experiences at the community college level. Black men face academic challenges before and after entering their first year of college. Black men are more likely to be unprepared for college because of their economic status, social exposure, and family income (Brooks et al., 2013). College readiness and peer affirmations play essential roles as challenges present themselves

during the first year of transitioning from high school to the collegiate environment.

According to Anumba (2015), hearing the voices of Black men who persisted in college can be significant because positive affirmations, along with help-seeking behaviors, could be part of a solution to address societal inequities for Black men. Anumba (2015); Johnson et al. (2015) stated that implementing interventions based on a study's outcomes could reverse the trend of adverse educational outcomes for the Black male population. Therefore, this study's results could reveal pathways to foster Black males' academic success in the local educational setting.

As Black men tend to have a low persistence rate at the study site and exit short of a degree, in this study, success strategies were identified; these strategies could be optimally found through the voices of Black men who have mastered educational persistence and success. It is essential to learn from efficacious Black men so that institutions and societies can begin to address the economic and social implications of Black male inequity (Anumba, 2015). Moreover, the success strategies could help Black men find their niche in higher education institutions and become positive role models for academic completion.

A success initiative currently used at the Southwestern community college study site includes underrepresented male students serving as mentors to increase success and positively impact retention, graduation, and transfer rates among male students of color. With limited research on Black men's success strategies, this study can assist Black men and the local site in implementing programs that increase the persistence and success rates, specifically for Black men. Black men have significantly lower academic

preparation in some areas than their 4-year counterparts; this lack of preparation necessitates interventions specific to Black men's needs in 2-year contexts (Harris & Wood, 2013).

Research Questions

This study's logical basis was to explore the lived experiences of academically successful Black male students in community college. Hearing the voices of those with success strategies, whether personal or academic, can lend positive insights into future Black male students' intrinsic motivation for persistence. The outcomes could be especially crucial for those who hesitate to pursue a college degree because of the challenges they may encounter or envision. The following three research questions (RQs) guided this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What college experiences do successful Black male students identify as key to persistence for degree attainment?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What college experiences present challenges or barriers to persistence for Black male students?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the personal motivating strategies that Black male students use for their successful persistence outcomes?

Review of Literature

The review of literature includes current and past research informed by researchers such as Ingram et al. (2016), Tinto (1975, 1988, 1993, 2016), Wood and Williams (2013), Harper (2012), and Walden scholars, who have provided insight into the lack of published research and information to substantiate Black male student

persistence and success. The literature review also contains research on persistence and intrinsic motivation informed by Bandura (1993), Deci and Ryan (1985, 2009, 2012, 2017), and Niemiec and Ryan (2009). This review consists of 60 current studies published within the past 5 years and 32 articles older than 5 years. I included peer-reviewed foundational work and references from the past 5 years, as well as several of Walden's peer-reviewed dissertations, to validate the study. For the initial examination of literature, I used Walden's Library, Educationnext.org, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), EBSCO, Google Scholar databases, Journal of Education (Jeep), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and The Journal of Negro Education. To broaden the perspectives, I explored web-based articles embedded in Google and Yahoo. I explored reports using online search engines and databases. I examined various research works with keywords to expand the breadth of the search. I used terms such as *Black male student persistence*, *Black male student academic success in community colleges*, *Black males in higher education*, *Black males in community college*, *Black males' graduation rates*, *self-efficacy*, *self-determination*, *motivation*, *autonomy*, and *persistence and success*.

Conceptual Framework

I grounded this study's conceptual framework in Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT motivational model of persistence. This conceptual framework is significant to the study and is relevant for the study design in answering the research questions. I interpreted the success strategies identified by participants in this study using Deci and Ryan's intrinsic motivational model of persistence.

Other researchers have used similar frameworks to understand persistence but without emphasis on intrinsic motivation. For example, I considered Tinto's (1988) and Astin's (1993) persistence models, as reviewed by others, and noted a consensus that they lack emphasis on intrinsic motivation (e.g., see Wood et al., 2016; York et al., 2015, respectively). Wood et al. (2016) identified Tinto's (1988) theory, an interactionist longitudinal model to address the quality of a student's academic and social interactions in college, as applicable to underrepresented groups and nontraditional students at 2-year colleges. York et al. (2015) posited that Astin's (1993) I-E-O model defined student success and achievement as an institutional input and an environmental factor. Although both models concern persistence, they did not fit well for this study, where the goal was to focus on intrinsic motivation and persistence, conducive to engagement, motivation, and learning for students. Niemiec and Ryan (2009) stated that intrinsic and autonomous motivation affect engagement and optimal learning in educational contexts.

I also considered Bandura's (1993) self-efficacy theory which focused on persistence and academic success in a 4-year institution. His theory indicated a need for further research on Black men in community colleges. Through reading Bandura's theory and peer-reviewed articles, I narrowed the focus for persistence using Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT as a fit for this project study. According to Bandura, students' self-efficacy exerts its control through levels of processes for academic achievement. Bandura's theory focused on competence (self-efficacy). Contrary to Bandura's hypothesis from the self-efficacy theory, Bandura denies autonomy's functional significance, using the SDT, Deci

and Ryan purported that students maintain intrinsic motivation for learning to validate themselves (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

I found Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT to be the better fit for this study because the authors focused on a motivational model of persistence. Moreover, Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT bodes well for this study because they emphasized students' inherent positive tendencies toward autonomy. Because this study concerns Black men's perspectives on the barriers to their achievement and how they persisted to success, Deci and Ryan provide a concept of internal motivation that was useful for interpreting results concerning internal motivation to persist. Deci and Ryan outlined three core psychological needs of students to be successful. The core needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci and Ryan suggested that individuals are self-determined to persist and succeed when they can meet these needs. Thus, these core needs provide the basis for understanding the participants' self-described motivation for this study. The framework I used in this study was relevant to the Black male persistence issue and had conceptual linkages to the purpose and guiding questions.

Self-Determination Theory

The conceptual framework for this study was the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed that all human beings are motivated by the three innate psychological factors: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. I used this conceptual framework to ground my findings regarding intrinsic motivation to persist. I considered the framework and how the findings related success strategies that could mediate Black men's low persistence and graduation rates. Using the SDT, I discovered positive

strategies concerning how motivation is related to student persistence and graduation attainment. Thus, for this study, I found the framework supported the research in showing gaps in the literature regarding Black male students' persistence in community college and the strategies of successful Black men.

Deci and Ryan (2012) described self-determination as an empirically derived theory of human motivation and personality in social contexts differentiating motivation as autonomous or controlled. The tenets of the theory are inherent to human nature, i.e., humans have the propensity to be curious about their environment and are interested in learning and developing knowledge (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Empirical evidence concerning intrinsic motivation suggested this form of motivation relates to engagement and optimal learning in educational contexts (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). The focus of self-determination is understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of learners. However, I focused this study on intrinsic motivation directly related to the student's self-directed ability to persist. As I used the theory, I found insight into how human behaviors are conducive to student motivation providing success strategies necessary for students to persist.

The self-determination model by Deci and Ryan (1985) includes the three motivational tenets of persistence,

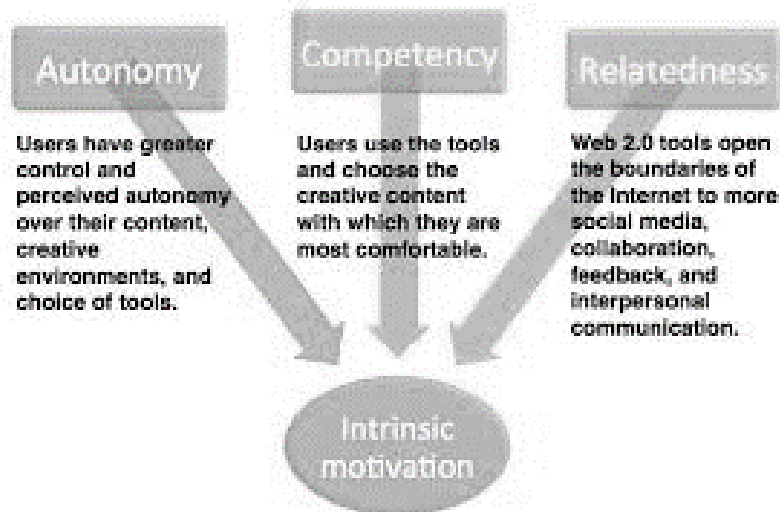
- **Autonomy:** People need to be self-directed and have ownership of their behaviors and goals.

- Competence: People need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills for achievement, knowledge, and skills. People need to build their competence and develop mastery over tasks that are important to them.
- Connection or Relatedness: People need to socially integrate experiencing a sense of belonging and attachment to others.

In this study, I aimed to uncover intrinsic motivational factors that mitigate the low persistence of Black men in community colleges by studying these students' lived experiences at the study site. The experiences of the students contained indicators of why and how they persisted. When students are intrinsically motivated, they tend to persist in educational settings. If students are intrinsically motivated, they demonstrate a personal commitment to driving themselves toward educational goals (Johnson et al., 2015; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). I show a self-determination model in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Self-Determination Framework of Intrinsic Motivation by Ryan and Deci.



Note. Schematic illustration of Deci and Ryan’s SDT shows relationships among the theory concepts and with intrinsic motivation. Adapted from “Self-determination theory: A macro theory of human motivation, development, and health.” by E. L. Deci and R. M. Ryan, 2008. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, pp. 182-185. (doi:10.1037/a0012801).

Persistence

Researchers have described students who remain enrolled in college until completing a degree as exhibiting persistence (Hall, 2017; Wood & Williams, 2013); this is the definition followed for this study. Black male students choose not to persist for various reasons under circumstances that are sometimes linked to the institution's faculty or administration. Immediate positive and constructive faculty feedback and rapport with students may increase student confidence and autonomy and the motivation to persist (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Autonomous environments support the students' innate motivation and persistence. When higher education professionals focus on student autonomy, they invest in the growth of students and their success (Ayllón et al., 2019; Harper, 2012). Environments that support students' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster relationships for students that they can rely on to make informed choices (Ayllón et al., 2019).

Black male community college students who struggle to complete a degree may benefit from having a blueprint of success strategies for graduation and having autonomy-supported leaders. Researchers and practitioners have successfully applied Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory of motivation for persistence in various educational environments. These diverse applications include sports, science subjects, and other classrooms (Keshtidar & Behzadnia, 2017; Wood, 2019). Thus, the theory is likely useful in this study setting as well.

Autonomy

The first of Deci and Ryan's (1985) tenets of motivation to persist is autonomous motivation. Higher education leaders could apply autonomous motivation as a success strategy to close the Black male persistence gap. Consistent with Wang et al. (2019), I have interpreted learner autonomy and motivation for this study in the context of self-direction and the need to feel ownership of behavior. Understanding student learners' motivation is critical for students to become self-directed and lifelong learners (Deci & Ryan, 2017). When students feel in control of their learning, they perform better (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Thus, it is likely that Black men learn to take control of their learning as they discover ways to develop the skills to persist to graduation. Alternatively, if students believe that they do not have control over their learning, they may not persist (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The feeling of not being in control harms motivation. Students can envision themselves graduating, despite barriers and extrinsic factors that impede success if they develop autonomy.

In contrast to Deci and Ryan's (1985) model of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation can be positively related to student pressure and negatively related to enjoyment and value. Thus, extrinsic motivation is controlled by external sources, such as teachers and administrators. A conclusion taken from Wang et al. (2019) concerning the two forms of motivation is that intrinsic motivation is synonymous with "want," and extrinsic motivation is synonymous with "ought." One important aspect of autonomous motivation is students' ability to engage in their learning inside and outside the classroom. Wang et al. (2019) posited that autonomous motivation is associated with

several positive outcomes for students, including higher engagement, creativity, performance, and persistence.

In a study involving a minority male college collaborative, the Community College of Baltimore County used a roadmap campus initiative to engage, support, and prepare Black males for success (Johnson et al., 2015). The study used an all-Black male orientation course and internal stakeholders to incorporate the initiative into their instructional discipline. The instruction provided validating messages from faculty and staff with help-seeking behavior from the Black males (Johnson et al., 2015). A critical factor in this study was the students' initiative to practice help-seeking behaviors. Davis (2014) provided research on Black male community college math students' behaviors after participating in a mentoring program. Davis concluded that these students expressed a profound interest in transferring into a 4-year institution. Research findings from the Baltimore Community College minority male college collaborative revealed that students placed more effort and focus on academics when conditions existed to support a sense of control over their future and self-efficacy (Johnson et al., 2015). Moreover, the results of this study concluded that Black males had higher persistence and success rates when they perceived a sense of control over their futures and a genuine intrinsic interest in course content and learning (Johnson et al., 2015). The Baltimore Community College student development course for Black males purposefully addressed these men's persistence and success.

Community colleges, including the study site, have begun to use mentoring programs and mentorships with supportive autonomous initiatives as drivers because of

the low persistence and graduation rates experienced by Black males and other ethnic groups (Johnson et al., 2015). These students could learn to take advantage of opportunities for educational advancement by initiating their learning success. Increasing student persistence and student success is the responsibility of both the student and the institution (Stewart et al., 2015). Students could benefit from taking the initiative to approach teachers, administrators, librarians, program leaders, and student success advisors to maximize their experience in a cultural learning climate. When teachers perceive that students are motivated to learn, they become more interested in teaching students (Wang et al., 2019). The SDT model encompasses a context to examine how students perceive success through the lens of overcoming barriers that promote competence.

Competence

The second tenet of the SDT of motivational persistence is competence. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), there is an innate need for students to perceive competence to persist. This need is satisfied by students when they feel effective (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Situational challenges that Black males experience can impact their competence to persist. Negative peer support, low-income family background, bad attitudes, stereotypes, and unpreparedness are factors that impede academic support of Black men. As Grant (2019) stated, a major personal factor affecting Black men in higher education is a lack of academic preparation to enter college. Without adequate preparation, students likely feel a compromised competence level (Ingram et al., 2016). Alternatively, experiencing life stability, family support, employment, transportation,

leadership roles, rapport with instructors, and financial soundness contribute to Black males' success in community colleges because these positives build confidence levels (Watts-Martinez, 2015). Black male students need these attributes to feel competent (Harper, 2012). Students' perceptions of their competence or confidence in the face of challenges affect their ability to persist in college (Bickerstaff et al., 2017), particularly for Black males (Harper, 2012). Bickerstaff et al. (2017) described how academic confidence could impact student motivation and commitment to pursuing academic credentials. When students feel confident in their ability to persist, they are more likely to matriculate.

Davis (2014) introduced a conceptual model for Black male student motivation, persistence, and success in community colleges. Davis developed the model to explore what motivates Black men to learn science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM) in community colleges. Davis used this STEM model to examine whether the colleges meet the needs of these students and how addressing these needs might impact student persistence in completing their academic goals and success after graduation. The model's results suggested that institutional, personal, academic, and psychological factors underlie the potential for success. Specifically, Black male students lack the confidence to overcome institutional, personal, academic, and psychological barriers colleges could address with tailored interventions. Thus, consistent with Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory, the Davis STEM model supported that demonstrated competence and relatedly confidence are essential to motivation.

According to Kahu et al. (2017), students with a higher interest in college education are more likely to be engaged learners and have positive learning experiences. These authors found a significant association between individual and situational interests with persistence. An enjoyable environment for students also increased their motivation and engagement. Kahu et al. (2017) results were similar to Deci and Ryan's (1985) motivational model of persistence. Deci and Ryan posited that students feel confident and thrive when the environment is enjoyable. When students have a profound interest in learning, they are more likely to spend the time necessary to complete assignments partly because they become more deeply engaged. Tinto (2016) summed up prevailing relationships among engagement, motivation, and persistence. Tinto reflected that students who are engaged more often take the time and effort, i.e., they put in the hard work to pursue a degree, such that when faced with barriers, they were motivated and persisted.

Relatedness

The third tenet in Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT of motivational persistence is relatedness. Students associate social integration with a sense of relatedness; for example, interactions with peers and involvement with extracurricular activities and academic-related activities on and off-campus were postulated to support motivation. Socialization can offer a vehicle for academic success because, as Goings et al. (2015) demonstrated, students remained engaged and connected when they had adequate social interaction. Social integration supported students in developing a feeling of connectedness on campus (Libby, 2006; Tinto, 1993). Thus, Black male students need to develop intentional

positive relationships with Black leaders. These relationships could be pivotal to help these students reach their highest potential (Goings et al., 2015). These findings from several studies imply that the goal of developing a mentoring program at the site for this study is well-considered.

Moreover, Black male students who spend time participating in social activities have a greater chance of persisting. In a social context, faculty who tend to value students' learning supported their need for relatedness (Ayllon et al., 2019). Faculty can determine the students' ability to succeed by the relationship they demonstrate. Students identified building positive relationships with peers, study groups, faculty, and administrators as having the most effect on their academic success (Bratton, 2018). Thus, mentorship for Black male students can originate specifically from relationships with Black leaders, and more casual mentoring that occurs with social interaction with faculty and other campus groups (Bratton, 2018) that increase social relatedness. This understanding of Deci and Ryan's third theoretical tenet is consistent with the aims of this project study.

Using theory distinct from SDT, Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) provided a social and cultural capital framework and described how support from family, peers, faculty members, and student affairs staff contributed to successful outcomes. Similarly, Urias and Wood (2014) researched institutional characteristics to ascertain if these characteristics made a difference in the Black male community college graduation rates. In this study, high levels of faculty-student engagement were characteristics of a college that had higher graduation rates. The predictors of faculty-student engagement and

student perceptions of their education contributing to Black male academic success were students' intrinsic interest and perceptions of degree utility (Wood & Newman, 2017). Specifically, degree utility and intrinsic interest were both positive determinants of faculty-student engagement, and as described above, this engagement predicted higher graduation rates. Faculty-student engagement contributes to Black male student success. The component with the most significant contribution to the model was faculty validation, i.e., students perceived faculty who provided positive feedback as validating them, and in the process, these faculty viewed Black male students as more engaged (Wood & Newman, 2017).

Students can discover ways to find motivation through relatedness in ways that do not require specific kinds of social interactions. For example, students who work on campus have better campus-related experiences that can lead to persistence. Working on campus facilitates integration into the academic and social settings of the college. Furthermore, working on campus often fostered bonds with various institutional agents, including other students with access to information. Even casual interactions with more knowledgeable students were beneficial to those students who lack connectedness to learn about campus-related policies, services, and procedures (Brooms & Davis, 2017). The less formal interactions with campus stakeholders appear valuable to students who need to cultivate a sense of relatedness to the campus at large.

Anumba (2015) studied success strategies as related to the persistence of Black male college students. The results of Anumba's study showed that valuable strategies for success included benevolence from their peer communities, building connections and

networks of support systems, role modeling, mentoring, and acquiring available resources. A central theme evolved from Black male students' lived experiences on campus: a service perception among their support systems. This theme referred to perceptions the students held about the feelings of success experienced when they helped others in their group to succeed. The mentorship and support gave them the competence they needed to succeed, as well. Participants in Anumba's study shared a common heritage and connectedness that created a bond, ensuring success for all. One participant in the study described the connection as a "targeted stimulus" that all institutions should consider in identifying student needs (Anumba, 2015). Participants emphasized that college was difficult, but it was easier to navigate with connections they made with others socially and academically.

According to Brooms (2018), students perceive that meeting and building relationships with their Black male peers enhanced their overall college experiences and supported their persistence. These networks and relationships tended to foster success in the student's experiences in socioemotional, academic, and financial areas. Although 4-year institutions used these strategies over two years, similar strategies could assist Black male students in a 2-year community college setting. Like Brooms (2018), Wood and Newman (2017) provided factors predicting faculty-student engagement for Black male students and how racial stereotypes determined their engagement with faculty. When faculty demonstrate respect and value in the student's ability to learn, students are more likely to feel relatedness and connectedness (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). Feeling valued by faculty supports the need for relatedness (Ayllon et al., 2019). Again, this project study

included Deci and Ryan's SDT, which focuses on relatedness, the third tenet of intrinsic motivation for persistence. As students make connections and build relationships, they feel a sense of self-worth and value.

Review of the Broader Problem

Black male students' persistence and academic success rates are lower than those of their counterparts (Harper, 2012; Harris & Wood, 2013). The term "academic success" in higher education is one of the most widely used constructs in educational research and assessment (York et al., 2015). Retaining Black male students in higher education is an ongoing crisis (Mitchell, 2015). According to Jones (2018), Black male students are often nontraditional, older, and married with dependents. These characteristics increase the likelihood of this population having to work while in school, which presents a challenge in persisting in college (Jones, 2018).

In reviewing the broader problem, there are consistencies in the factors contributing to this population's success. Alternatively, proactivity, experiencing life stability, family support, employment, transportation, leadership roles, rapport with instructors, and financial soundness contribute to the success of Black male students in community colleges because these positives build confidence levels. Black male students need these attributes to feel competent (Harper, 2012). Many factors can influence the success of Black male college students. However, proactively choosing the appropriate institution can have implications for students' level of success when persisting (Harper, 2012; Stewart et al., 2015; Wood & Harris, 2015). If students attend the institution of

their choice, then the chances of becoming motivated to persist and graduate increase partly due to feeling some control over their destinies.

Davis (2014) suggested that Black male students have often been portrayed as victims, blamed for their lack of success, lack of persistence to attainment, and not having the self-efficacy or grades to transfer to 4-year institutions. According to Tinto (2016), self-efficacy is not fixed and can be influenced by the student's experience during the first critical year at a higher institution. Therefore, interventions in the first year can be pivotal and would be consistent with the use of a mentoring program at the study site. Through the lived experiences of successful Black males, this study can empower those students who are not persisting and disengage them from the negative portrayal of Black men. Contrary to negative portrayals, some Black male students are succeeding in community college, and this success needs to increase along with the improvement of the image of the Black male student (Harper, 2012). Closing the Black male persistence gap should occur at the community college level where more Black men and other underrepresented populations are educated, more than any other type of higher education institution.

Psychological Success

The psychology of success can significantly impact the student's ability to persist and succeed. Some Black male students predict a gloomy future for themselves based on their parents' failures and past generational patterns within their families (Graham, 2016). Parental failure does not mandate student failure. A student can become successful by acquiring knowledge, confidence, and strategies that have an impact on their academic

success regardless of their parents' academic failures. To be successful, students must be autonomous and exude confidence. Students have an innate motivation to be successful (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Wang et al., 2019).

Similar to Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT, Dweck's (2016) mindset theory concerns the ability to persist through self-efficacy and self-management. Moreover, Dweck posited that self-belief could guide a student through life. If students have a fixed mindset, they are more likely to self-validate by proving that they are capable but may not necessarily persist. On the other hand, if students have a growth mindset, they are concerned with learning and developing their abilities to persist. The psychological factors of success related to the student's mindset can determine the student's ability to motivate to persistence.

Lewis (2016) explored psychological success relative to Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT motivational model of persistence in a study of behaviors, interpersonal experiences, and attitudes of Black men in the college environment. Lewis studied how Black men transition into college settings. Lewis indicated that qualitative research methods were those more often used to study the Black male college population. Students' background, culture, race, and upbringing influence their behaviors and attitudes. Attitudes can shape students' perceptions, and behavior can drive actions that reflect persistence (Ezeala-Harrison, 2014). Students might be less likely to persist if their parents do not prioritize education. Ezeala-Harrison (2014) posited that student attitudes could determine their overall perceptions of higher education. Positive behaviors, along with robust support systems, can lead to positive outcomes.

In contrast to psychological success is the psychological frailty that plagues Black men. Psychological frailty is a psychological state of Black men who could fail in college because they perceive themselves as "temporary" students and unwelcome in higher education institutions (Bir & Myrick, 2015). Similarly, some Black men in college experience the failure syndrome in which they internalize the negative thoughts by permitting stereotypes to become self-fulfilling prophecies (Von Robertson & Chaney, 2015). When members of a particular group become aware of their supposed limited intellectual capacity and inability to learn, they become convinced of these preconceptions, resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies where they tend toward failure (Hall, 2017). These negative impacts often follow students from their early education to college. Despite low self-esteem and unpreparedness, recent self-efficacy studies have shed some light on positive characteristics that have arisen from some positive student and institutional initiatives (Babbie, 2017; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Davis, 2014; Meyer, 2015; Wood & Harris, 2015). For example, motivation related to focus and commitment to academics was a personal quality that carried community college students toward better outcomes (Davis, 2014).

These students and institutional initiatives discounted negative images by teaching positive personal traits, academic success paths, and workforce skill sets. Similarly, Brooms and Davis (2017) discussed positive influences on persistence as they revealed how students transformed a deficit perspective to a positive persistence effort after experiencing peer-to-peer bonding and associations among Black male students and mentoring from Black faculty. This latter consideration is especially relevant to this

project study because the study site has initiated a new mentoring program to include all underrepresented students.

According to Koppie (2017), Black males' perceptions of their existing family support, communication opportunities, and school involvement can affect their educational success. When students viewed these factors as positives, the psychological well-being and sense of capability in academics improved. Black male students must persist despite challenging situations they face as college students. The decisions they make as students impact their futures academically, socially, and financially. According to Wood and Harris (2015), as students transition to higher education, they face several important decisions that will significantly impact their future and earning potential. As depicted in research literature, the persistence in developing educational equity and attaining a degree is crucial for Black male students' overall well-being and the country's economic future.

Tinto (1988) found through research that the higher a student's level of commitment to the higher education institution, the more likely the student would persist. Tinto showed that higher education institutions' interest is to increase graduation rates and the student's intent is to complete a degree without regard to the institution in which they earned a degree. According to Tinto (2016), the two perspectives are different, and overall, Tinto placed much weight on the institutions' role in supporting students. Thus, the college should take the student's perspective first and foremost if the aim is to increase persistence rates. There must be common ground between the students and institutions, such that the institution supports students in a welcoming atmosphere. In

contrast to Tinto's model of persistence, Bean and Metzner's (1985) model of nontraditional students posited that the students' familial, work, and financial challenges directly affect their persistence and has an indirect effect on their psychological outcomes. Bean and Metzner suggested that Tinto's persistence model did not adequately account for factors affecting nontraditional students that are personal to their experiences.

According to Tinto's (1988) dropout theory, students will leave school when they perceive the institution does not explicitly support their degree attainment and their goals are incongruent with the college. Similarly, Villarreal and Garcia (2016) posited that when Black male students felt overwhelmed, they considered dropping out of a course. The authors used the SDT to interpret and understand ways to empower students to persist. In Villarreal and Garcia's (2016) study, the underrepresented students' personal determination to achieve their goals along with assistance from faculty, i.e., as role-model/mentors, enabled them to persist.

Similar to Deci and Ryan's SDT (1985), the finding was that students who are autonomous and develop a sense of relatedness and belonging could increase motivation and self-determination. Consistent with theory and study results from Villarreal and Garcia, these student characteristics can be fostered in community colleges as a way to facilitate student persistence. Particularly and as similar to the project site goals, mentorship could play a key role in bringing out students' existing characteristics that best support their success.

Rosser-Mims et al. (2014) explored Black male students' experience reentering as adult college students. The authors examined 15 Black males' college experiences and

the impacts of reentry on graduation. Rosser-Mims et al. (2014) focused on the changing clientele of colleges and how colleges must adjust their programs to include the Black male adult learner. To this end, institutional programs that create a welcoming environment are known to impact the student positively; thus, with a growing need for students to return to college, institutional initiatives are essential. To overcome the barriers Black men face in college, they must be prepared and have credentials to substantiate their reentry qualifications. Colleges and universities must reach out to all groups of students to assist with reentering college after a layoff, military service, and other paths that have hindered enrollment. Some implications from the Rosser-Mims et al. (2014) study were that precollege experiences did not prepare the Black male sufficiently because of factors such as attending a poor school district, dropout rates, incarceration, and health problems that plagued the Black community. Institutions and faculty could bridge the gap with reentry by making the students feel welcome through collaboration and social integration.

Bandura (1993) theorized that student's beliefs in their self-efficacy to regulate their learning and master academic activities determine their aspirations and accomplishments. Self-efficacy, along with achievement goals and perceived support, can increase motivation and predict persistence (Simon et al., 2015). When used in the educational setting, Bandura's theory is socio-cognitive and is related to Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT because the theory regards the relationship of self-efficacy and academic motivation (Ingram et al., 2016). As these theories are connected, Bandura and Deci and Ryan address the need for competence (self-efficacy), which is pertinent to the SDT.

Personal Factors

As suggested in the discussion above concerning psychological success, personal factors are an integral part of Black male success. Factors such as student crises, isolation, and missed assignments due to illnesses can have a negative impact on student success. Students need family and faculty support to remain encouraged. As with other student populations, Black male students must discover keys to success through personal factors and self-determination to be successful in the college environment. Personal, institutional, and psychological factors are interrelated and contribute to academic success (Davis, 2014; Wang et al., 2019). Finding a fit in a comfortable environment requires collaboration, guidance, peer bonding, acclimation, and self-determination attitudes. Personal factors determine the success or lack of success for Black male community college outcomes. With family support, faculty support, adequate finances, transportation, and other stability factors, Black males can become more successful.

Antideficit Achievement

Harper (2012) explained an antideficit framework created to examine Black men's academic achievement for a strengths-based outlook. Researchers use antideficit approaches to discover often overlooked strengths of Black men. Researchers have tended to overlook these strengths due to the portrayal of Black male students using negative stereotypes and images. Harper posited that those Black men with college preparation, successfully choose post-college options such as careers or graduate studies. Although Black men in Harper's study faced challenges, Harper demonstrated a reframed research approach contrary to the common assumption of underachievement, inadequate

preparation, and disengagement of Black male students in higher education. Harper's reframing centered on how Black male college students manage to persist and earn their degrees, despite stereotypes and other hostile forces. In contrast to questioning why Black male student persistence and degree attainment rates are lowest nationally, it becomes essential to understand how Black male students have persisted despite debilitating challenges. Harper suggested emphasizing antideficit achievements to offset stereotypical and overstated deficit messaging from media sources, academic researchers, and educators. This study (i.e., Harper, 2012) conducted one of the most extensive studies known to understand Black male student college success based on sociology, psychology, gender studies, and education theories.

Overcoming Barriers

Davis (2014) described Black men's educational, social, and financial outcomes as more destructive collectively than for any other demographic group in the United States. Among racial and ethnic groups, these men tend to have higher unemployment, poorer health, and more extended incarceration periods than others. Escape from these life problems can be overwhelming. Providing positive influences for Black male students can be a challenge due to the need to circumvent the negative social stereotypes they encounter. Land et al. (2014) amassed Black male high school students' success stories on overcoming some life challenges to access higher education eventually. The study included descriptions of some barriers these students faced, such as coming from single-parent or dysfunctional households, financial distress, and peer pressure. The overarching theme of these stories was these young men's ability to find and use positive

influences; these influences were critical for them to realize the need to change direction and adopt a different mindset to turn their lives around and be successful.

Social support, family support, and positive personal characteristics can all contribute to success when Black male students face challenges. Positive influences from family members, community members, faculty, and mentors directly affect student persistence as they enter the college process. Saenz and Combs (2015) discussed supporting students by positively influencing their transition process to college. Stakeholders supporting students going into college helped them become acclimated and accept a positive college environment.

Wood et al. (2016) explored the student's perspective of academic success as it relates to successful employment. The researchers addressed the preparation of Black male students seeking to find a balance for successful work-college relationships. The findings were that employment was a barrier to academic success. According to Jones (2018), adjusting to work schedules and long hours hindered their abilities to apply themselves to their studies. Thus, it is unclear how adult males reentering college who must work will fare under these circumstances (Jones, 2018). Therefore, finding a balance between work and school is essential to the student's overall academic success.

In contrast, Strayhorn (2015) found that working while going to school positively correlates with learning in the classroom. Similarly, Tinto (1993) suggested that working on campus can be beneficial to students because it facilitates their integration into an academic and social setting creating bonds with faculty, staff, and administrators. All students desire to be successful when they enroll in college, but a lack of academic

preparedness, the inability to navigate and acclimate to the college climate, and not being able to tap into needed resources contribute to academic barriers (Strayhorn, 2015).

According to Grant (2019), this population of men may have to work in positions that classify them as underemployed, or they may enter the penal system where society perceives them as a burden on the economy.

Brooman and Darwent (2014) conducted a quantitative study measuring the change in factors that influenced first-year students' success during their college transition. The question researchers posed was related to how higher education institutions successfully transfer students from one educational level to the next. The researchers measured confidence, independent learning, and social integration. Brooman and Darwent included 195 students of diverse backgrounds. Although not all were Black male students, the outcomes reflected some of the same themes that were exclusive to Black male students. For example, the results illustrated how social change in institutions could play a role in students' success by engaging students and countering deficit thinking. In examining enablers and barriers to Black male success, stakeholders must also consider the impact institutional collaboration may have on students' college success. Students are more likely to be persistent and succeed with the assistance of institutions, faculty, administrators, and staff (Koppie, 2017).

Institutional Collaboration and Persistence Factors – Early College

Although this study addresses some Black male students who are currently attending community college, it is essential to mention institutional change and collaboration utilizing early college programs for Black male students. Black male

students' entry into early college programs are viewed as a vehicle for successful persistence strategies. While some researchers have focused on student experiences in early college programs, few researchers have examined Black male students' perceptions in this environment (Adams, 2016). Early college programs work in collaboration with college administrators and are a way for Black male students to persist to degree attainment without financial burden on their families. These programs contribute to students attaining a full college degree while attending high school beginning in the 9th-grade. To qualify for these programs, students must meet specific criteria outlined by the college. For this route to be successful for Black male students, they must have an interest, family support, and high school administrators' support. Colleges can use success strategies for first-year Black male students and Black male early college students. Because students often view early college as a time of mandatory engagement, early college students have better attendance, higher engagement levels, and better relationships with teachers (Edmunds et al., 2013). Early college administrators require students to be active participants. Limitations to an active participant approach may include not being able to participate in college networking activities face-to-face because of the limited time on the higher education campus and altered operations. Other limitations may stem from an administrative perspective of not choosing Black male students because of their perceived behaviors, deficits, and stereotypes that the media and higher education institutions have placed on them.

Society must change the way stakeholders perceive and interact with Black male students in education and, in general, to better promote their academic and social

development toward education and lifelong success (Goings et al., 2015). Institutions must be proactive in how they perceive, communicate, teach, and hold accountable underrepresented students (Tinto, 1988). As a specific concern for this project study, Black males in higher education deserve the attention of this kind because they lag other groups in persistence. To effectively and culturally be responsive in teaching Black male students, institutions of higher education must better incorporate the perspectives and stories of Black men, their contribution to the classroom instruction and curriculum, and the use of Black literature, research, and other resources (Goings et al., 2015). Being culturally responsive to Black male students is also consistent with the study site program's purpose under exploration.

Most researchers cited in this literature review tended to identify Black male students as facing challenging situations upon entry and matriculation. Overall, these researchers concluded that Black male students could overcome their challenges. Some indicated that participating in campus activities, being open to learning methods, changing their mindset about college, and shifting to a more positive behavior model using critical thinking skills were keys to success. While researchers made recommendations to assist with Black male persistence, a gap remains in practice and the literature related to persistence and promoting positive self-determination for Black men in community college.

Implications

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to examine the voices of Black male students in community college to gain an understanding of their perspectives on

success strategies used to persist to degree attainment. I collected the personal perceptions of Black male students to create a blueprint of successful strategies that can foster this population's academic attainment and success, focusing on persistence. The identified personal success strategies could provide an impetus for change for the underrepresented Black male population at the study site and in a broader population.

The outcomes of this study are critical because the study site as well as literature lack documentation on the persistence of Black male students using an SDT approach. Further research is needed to evaluate how Black male students persist despite barriers. Moreover, this study corresponds with the broader problem society faces today as reassessment is imperative on how Black men are respected, treated, and educated in systems that display racism. Although I focused this study on motivating Black male students using success strategies in higher education, improving the deficit views and image of Black men and addressing Black male student inequities were essential to this study.

I will use the outcomes from this study in a 3-day workshop at the local site on success strategies of Black Males in community colleges with a focus on self-leadership for persistence. This workshop could be an orientation course for Black male students to support their needs addressing persistence. The persistence training could provide Black male students with information on best practices and strategies to persist in community college. Participants could receive resource information and view videos to assist with defining and supporting persistence. Training might become quarterly to continue the work, assess outcomes, and gather feedback to support persistence. Black men experience

a positive influence when others support their academic undertakings (Wood & Palmer, 2016). Implications for addressing Black male student success include improving Black male students' persistence and success rates, improving the college's success rate of Black men; thus, increasing the chances of this underrepresented population being successful in the community college, the workplace, and society. Moreover, the study's information may assist Black male students and the study site with an awareness of the needs and barriers for this population of underrepresented men.

Summary

This study examined the local problem and the broader problem related to Black male student persistence and success in community college. The problem statement asserted that Black males did not persist as well as other groups of individuals. The Black male persistence rate was lower than any other racial group or gender. Over the years, the broader population and the study site have used initiatives to improve Black male students' persistence rates; however, these students still lag in persistence compared to their counterparts. However, as Harper (2012) identified, all Black men do not struggle with persistence and graduation success issues. There are Black male students in college who persist in degree attainment. I aimed this study to gather data on attributes of Black men who have persisted in community college versus Black men who have struggled as students in higher education.

In Section 1, I defined the problem of Black male persistence in community college. The rationale for choosing the topic was based upon the persistence and success rates nationally and locally for Black male students in community college. I defined the

key terms, and the significance of the study, and presented a literature review to justify the scope of the problem locally and nationally. Relevant to the topic, I presented three research questions for the project study. A conceptual framework designating the SDT was used. Section 2 of the study includes information on data collection and data analysis. I used the analyzed data to formulate a report of the findings for this project.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this study was to gather success strategies used for the persistence of Black male students in community college. Understanding the perspectives of Black male students is key to this qualitative study. I used interviews of Black male students to gain a better understanding of why persistence rates are low and how to address it for this population. This section contains the descriptions and explanations of the methodology used in this study. I present the qualitative research design and approach for the study, the participants, data collection, data analysis, and limitations in preparation for the final study.

The design of this research was a general interview-based qualitative case study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that most qualitative research studies are referred to as general qualitative research because they are unspecified and do not situate themselves within a specific approach. However, I designed this study to adhere to a generic approach with fewer bounds than some other designs. According to Percy et al. (2015), a generic approach includes various data collection methods without adapting to traditional designs such as case studies or phenomenology. Based on the suggestions of Percy et al. (2015) for the generic approach, I chose this design as appropriate for this project. Data collection proceeded using qualitative methods for interviews; I designed open-ended interview questions.

Unlike the use of a survey, an interviewer relies exclusively on semistructured or open-ended questions. An interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a

respondent in which the interviewer uses a plan of inquiry, including the topics to cover (Babbie, 2017, p. 319). In both surveys and interviews, the researcher specifies questions to spawn participant responses (Babbie, 2017). An open-ended interview permits the participants to reply in whatever way they wish, using their answers, opinions, or prejudices without restrictions (Babbie, 2017; Thomas, 2013). I considered a narrative method and related design for this study. However, studies with a narrative design involved detailed stories focused on very few individuals (Ravitch & Carl, 2016); thus, I rejected the design because interviewing one or two individuals for this study was insufficient to address the research question. Lambert (2013) described that researchers should prepare their main questions before the interview, ask additional questions, or discuss additional topics they did not explicitly plan. I followed this procedure and obtained an adequate sample size to develop enough information for a college-wide workshop.

As suggested by Butin (2010), I created a qualitative design consisting of detailed data gathering as I considered the opinions and perspectives of the students. Researchers predicate qualitative research on the concept that people construct knowledge by engaging with others and making meaning of activity. The analysis yields rich and detailed results beyond those developed in quantitative analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used a qualitative design to develop rich descriptions of how Black men developed persistence strategies in a community college study site.

A qualitative approach was best for this study because I could use this approach to facilitate a better understanding by gathering individuals' views that researchers may not

have previously uncovered. A quantitative design was not appropriate for the study purpose because I would not have engaged participants to gather their unique success stories or lack of success. Researchers use quantitative designs to gather numerical data and measure independent variables. The critical distinction between qualitative and quantitative design is that qualitative researchers enlist words and stories, while quantitative researchers use numbers (Butin, 2010). In this qualitative design, I used data gathered through the participant interview process.

This qualitative approach was consistent with the problem statement in identifying success strategies that foster educational persistence for Black men in community college. Keeping the emphasis on identifying successful persistence strategies was consistent with the SDT posited by Deci and Ryan (1985). Many researchers have used qualitative studies to focus on the Black male population (Lewis, 2016).

In this study, I sought to understand the participants' viewpoints and extrapolated information-rich resources. The study site's Institutional Review Board (IRB) leader provided and approved an application to conduct research using human subjects. Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the conduct of research for this study with the approval number of 01-04-21-0682682. I submitted IRB Form C to the committee chair for this project. I aligned all aspects of this study with the stipulations set forth by Walden's IRB and the study site's IRB. Using a qualitative approach, I explored success strategies conducive to persistence for graduation and support positive paradigms of intrinsic motivational factors for Black men in community college.

Participants

For this project study, I used the purposeful sampling strategy of intensity sampling for Black men with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Intensity sampling uses information-rich sources that are resonant examples of the phenomenon but are not extreme examples (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I interviewed 10 students for this project study based on the recruitment and availability of the participants. I anticipated that some students would not respond to the request to participate in the study. Some of the 10 participating students were graduates and prior participants of the Black men's mentorship program. Other Black male students were current full-time students affiliated with a new diverse mentoring program, honor societies, and students from the general population at the study site. The program leaders have not yet fully established the new diverse mentoring program, and therefore, I invited Black male students from the study site based on availability, providing a mix with the students from the traditional general population and mentoring programs at the study site. The study site's IRB leader provided access to the participants. I sent emails to students to notify them that I chose them for the study. Fewer than 10 students responded initially; therefore, I reached out to the study site's IRB leader for permission to recruit more potential participants. I offered these additional recruits a chance to participate because the first group of respondents' data did not reach saturation.

For students to be eligible for this study, the participants had to be Black men currently enrolled or formerly enrolled as full-time students (12–18 credit hours). Part-time students were not a part of this study, as it is difficult to predict their pattern of

persistence and reason for enrollment. I selected only students who had above-average grades. Students with higher achievements are more likely to persist in their programs, emphasizing the importance of peer support and academic skills that foster academic achievement, Simon et al. (2015).

For this study, I used purposeful sampling, sometimes called judgmental sampling. Researchers select purposeful samples based on their judgment of the most useful representatives for the study (Babbie, 2017). Purposeful sampling ensured deliberate selection to provide the data for this study. Moreover, purposeful sampling offered cost-efficiency advantages, less time required for study completion, and increased the participation rate (White-Neil, 2016).

I used open-ended telephone interviews as the primary means of collecting data to address the research questions. I conducted audiotaped interviews and conducted follow-up sessions to validate responses by the participants. The respondents were able to interpret and reflect on their successful experiences. After obtaining IRB approval from Walden University, I completed the study site's IRB approval process to conduct a project study with Black male students. After approval from the study site's IRB leader, I sent emails to each potential participant asking for their participation. I emailed an informed consent form to the participants stating that their participation in this study is voluntary, and I would not reveal their identities at any time. I assigned pseudonyms to all participants to protect their identities and confidentiality in this study.

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, I used semistructured interviews as an instrument to gain knowledge of Black male students' lived experiences in community college. As described by Ravitch and Carl (2016), I organized and conducted the semistructured interviews to include specific, tailored follow-up within and throughout the interview. I emailed a personal consent form to all potential participants. I used telephone interview protocol along with audiotapes of student interviews as data collection. I conducted the interviews to provide participants with opportunities to talk about their experiences, personal feelings, and intuitions regarding Black men's persistence at the community college level, with change expectations.

I recruited student participants from the pool of Black men affiliated with the 2-year community college and selected those with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. A GPA of 3.0 was the benchmark for academic success in this study. Harrison et al. (2015) affirmed that a GPA of 3.0 or higher criterion suggests high academic achievement for Black male students. These students were able to articulate successful experiences that struggling students may not have experienced. The students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher demonstrated substantial academic success. I used open-ended questions to solicit data to discover problems and opportunities for this population.

I presented interviews in a telephone setting and focused on the participants' perspectives. I audiotaped the interviews using Otter voice meeting notes software. I created a form to document the interviews and post-interview notes. I employed open-

ended questions of “how” or “what” to ascertain information relative to the study's research questions.

I informed participants of all procedures, and sent the informed consent form to them through email. They returned the informed consent before the interview. The participants replied to the email, "I consent." The consent briefly outlined a description of the project study, participants' rights, disclosure of potential risks, and the participant's confidentiality during and after the study. I contacted participants via email before the interview. I requested the IRB leader at the study site to encourage Black men to volunteer if they had above-average academic performance of a GPA of 3.0 or higher and connections with the mentoring programs. I selected participants who met the criteria for the study. The duration of the interviews was no fewer than 30 minutes but did not exceed 60 minutes. Participants agreed to a follow-up interview within 10 days of the initial interview for follow-up questions. Participants did not receive any benefits from the interview. I performed all interviews by telephone or Zoom meeting, and I captured the content by audio recording. If a participant could not attend the initial telephone interview, I gave them the option to reschedule within a 10-day window.

Potential Research Bias

In qualitative interviews, researchers must consider how they could inject bias and the steps they can take to prevent it from affecting the outcomes (Babbie, 2017; Butin, 2010). A researcher's characteristics can affect what they perceive in the interview responses and how they interpret data. Furthermore, the researcher can bias the participants' responses; how a researcher poses the questions can often subtly bias

participant answers (Babbie, 2017). Excluding bias is challenging but researchers can do this with a proper interview protocol structure. According to Butin (2010), the researcher must appear neutral and interested in the participant's responses to reduce researcher bias. I asked participants to review their data to avoid influencing the results and achieve specific outcomes. Effective interviewing includes open-ended questions that elicit meaningful and deep responses from participants who take on the narrative structure (Butin, 2010).

I have a relationship in the setting as faculty but did not have a relationship with the participants. The relationship or biases related to the interview topic did not affect the data collection. As the researcher, I did not have any expectations or preconceptions about the interview questions. Although I am a Black female educator affiliated with 2-year community colleges and have a Black male son who graduated from a 4-year, Tier One institution, I did not know, nor have I explored Black men's experiences in a 2-year college setting struggling with persistence. I determined what was pertinent to Black male students' persistence in community college and what was not in this study.

Because Black men have the lowest persistence rates locally and nationally, and the college had discontinued the former all-Black men's program at the study site, I have a profound interest in interceding with struggling Black male students. There is a need to bring to the forefront those Black men who have conquered educational barriers and have graduated with fewer struggles. I focused the study on identifying successful strategies for persistence that supported the participants in higher education.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the interview responses and analyzed the data to discover codes, common themes and patterns linked to the research questions. I password-protected the interview responses on a computer and will keep these confidential on the study site's computer drive that only I can access. As suggested by Butin (2010) and Ravitch and Carl (2016), I assigned each participant a participant number to protect their identities and reduce the chances of researcher bias. I followed Saldaña's (2016) described methods for developing themes and categories; I analyzed the participants' responses line by line to identify emerging themes and categories of interest. In qualitative analysis, researchers code data to add meaning as they organize and break the data into manageable segments (Ravitch & Carl, 2016); thus, this method supports the validity of the findings in the study. Following these methods, I compared a segment of data with others to develop the themes and categories.

I used interviews to extrapolate information on success strategies Black male students used to attain their degrees. I asked all open-ended questions to encourage stories and examples with additional anticipated questions stemming from the interview stories. Walden University offers NVivo as a qualitative data analysis program to codes data by assigning nodes. I did not use NVivo as initially planned. I categorized the data manually using commonalities. Saldaña (2016) described the use of open coding to begin an analysis, and I used open coding and analysis applied to qualitative text, most often in the form of stories that uniquely describe human experiences. I found these open codes in

examination and questioning of the data. I organized the data into sentence segments, categories, and labeling.

Evidence of Quality

To validate research in qualitative designs, researchers use four concepts for thoroughness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I designed the study's steps to show evidence of quality and procedures to assure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. I examined the procedures in the design for trustworthiness to ensure credibility. Credibility was used for trustworthiness to examine the participant's responses from recordings and the researcher's interpretation through email for verification. I asked open-ended and indirect questions through phone interviews. Qualitative research should have validity approaches that align with the research study's research questions, goals, and contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I address the four concepts of trustworthiness in the following sections.

Credibility

I used member checking, a form of credibility, to contribute to the validity of the data collected from participant feedback (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using member checks defined the trustworthiness of credibility in the research. Using member checks, I engaged the participants in reviewing and providing feedback on their transcribed interviews to ensure trustworthiness. I collected data to the point of saturation, i.e., when participants did not give new information (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Analyses of the data were conducted precisely and consistently, disclosing details to validate the data. I used inductive analysis of data to extrapolate the significant themes of the data.

Transferability

Transferability is a validity strategy to make the research applicable. The interviews included a thick, rich, detailed description of the data so that readers can make comparisons to other contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I extrapolated as much information as possible from the participants making sure that the data were authentic and specific. Researchers realize transferability in qualitative research by applying the findings to new cases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants' detailed descriptions increase the ability to transfer this study's findings to Black male students at other community colleges with similar persistence issues.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability concern the consistency and reliability of data of each step in the data collection process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Dependability of the data regards collection that reflects these responses and results consistently over time and answers the questions that inform the project. Dependability also includes that researchers vet the research design with critical peers to consider other methodological possibilities and limitations that may exist in the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For dependability and conformability, I had initially wanted to enlist a peer reviewer's assistance for advice on the project design but decided not to use a peer reviewer to keep the study confidential. The peer reviewer was a credentialed Ph.D. in the educational field with no investment in the research nor participants. This peer reviewer could have offered other suggestions and assistance with the data for consistency. I worked toward confirmability by attempting to avoid bias as much as possible. My written transcripts

were double-checked for mistakes, correct codes, and data consistency (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Discrepant Responses

The final step to check the integrity of the study included searching for discrepant responses that challenge or contradict the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Identifying such responses requires separate categorization. I planned to use distinct categories for discrepant responses and analyze those data for atypical standards outside of this study. In any study, the researcher should deliberately seek out cases that challenge the expectations of the data findings (Merriam, 2009). These challenges can lead to the need for further investigation into the research of the topic. The discrepant responses could support identifying situations and additional insight into enablers and success barriers. Obtaining an unexpected participant's view could be a valued asset and lead to additional questions to use in the eventual project workshop. However, in this study, I found no contradictions among the findings and prior research.

Limitations

This project study has limitations. The sampling size was relatively small but sufficient for the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I assessed saturation after completing each transcription. The GPA of 3.0 or higher may have excluded some Black men who were successful but may have experienced extenuating circumstances that affected their grade point averages. A GPA of 3.0 was an indicator of success because these students were above the average grade of “C” and were not struggling to complete their courses (Scherer et al., 2017). Moreover, I limited the study to Black male students in community

college mentoring programs, traditional and nontraditional general population of Black male students who did not struggle with persistence. Findings were based on responses from a small sample of the general population and may not be transferrable to the study site's broader population and broader community college setting.

The current pandemic COVID-19 situation forced altered operations at the study site, and only a telephone interview with the option of Zoom for the participant was permissible. Limitations that may have arisen from a qualitative method approach are implicit bias and assumptions that could be dependent on the researcher's skills and personal views. Interviews are far from neutral, with layers of bias, assumptions, and other types of influences that cannot be verified (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher may be judgmental and interject personal beliefs in the results. Moreover, limitations may also arise from only collecting open-ended interview-based data. Open-ended interview-based data studies only use one data source instead of conducting a more comprehensive collection using triangulation of data sources. I used only one source, interviews, to form themes or categories based on the participants' responses that I coded. Alternatively, triangulation can lead to different perspectives on a problem. Although this study had limitations, I completed the study to identify success strategies of persistence used by Black male college students to inform other Black men, the study site, and researchers.

Data Analysis Results

The logical basis for this study was to explore the lived experiences of successful Black male students in community college. The local problem that compelled this study was the gap in practice of Black male success strategies for persistence at the local study

site and the continuing low persistence rates among this population consistent with research. Given the preponderance of deficit-oriented dialogue on Black men, the results show a positive light on the trajectory of Black male students in higher education. In this study, I examined the understanding of persistence for these students through the lens of Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT of intrinsic motivation. The theory included the three tenets of (a) autonomy, i.e., a need for students to control their learning; (b) competence, i.e., the need for students to experience mastery; (c) relatedness or connectedness, i.e., the urge for students to interact with others. According to the theory, students' willingness to engage in learning and persist without external influence is key to their success.

Along with theory, the problem and the following three research questions that I posed directed this study: RQ1: What college experiences do successful Black male students identify as key to persistence for degree attainment? RQ2: What college experiences present challenges or barriers to persistence for Black male students? RQ3: What are the personal motivating strategies that Black male students use for their successful persistence outcomes?

I used the interview guide provided by Walden University (Laureate Education, 2016) to conduct the interviews and capture the participants' lived experiences. I used Otter software and a cell phone to record and transcribe the voice recordings. I completed the transfer of data from Otter for each participant on the same day as the interview to keep the data fresh in mind. Otter time-stamped the data for ease of finding reference points. However, I had to edit some of the transcripts used by Otter. As with most electronically transcribed information, the spoken word or meaning did not fully match

some data in the audio. Throughout the process, I compared the transcript and the audio-taped interview material frequently for accuracy. I did not use NVivo as initially planned. I found NVivo to be complicated and a long learning process.

In the next step, I filled in any information missed or not presented as the participant stated. I color-coded the codes and themes that I extracted from the interviews. Moreover, I kept an audit trail detailing the times and dates of the interviews and the coding process. The themes aligned with the research questions.

Before beginning the analysis, I assigned each participant with a participant number, to protect their identities and diminish the potential for researcher bias during analysis (Butin, 2010; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For example, I labeled the data collection for the first participant as “P1” in the transcripts and in the aggregate data. All participants met the criteria for participation (see Table 1) and gave informed consent before the interviews.

Table 1*Participants' Mentorship and Academic Status*

Participant	Affiliation/mentorship	GPA met	Academic year
P1	Black male mentoring program	Yes	2018-2019
P2	Black male mentoring program	Yes	2018-2019
P3	Mentor – honor society	Yes	2018-2019
P4	Black male mentoring program	Yes	2017-2018
P5	Black male mentoring program/faculty	Yes	2019-2020
P6	Black male mentoring program	Yes	2018-2019
P7	Mentor – ex-student	Yes	2018-2019
P8	Mentor – education planner	Yes	2019-2020
P9	Mentor – faculty	Yes	2019-2020
P10	N/A	Yes	2019-2020

The study site research leader provided a list that included 45 Black male students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher to facilitate recruitment. I contacted each student by email. Eligible students had been enrolled in the Black male mentoring program, other programs on campus and the general population of nontraditional and traditional students. Ten respondents met the criteria and consented to participate in the study. I interviewed several adult learners for this population. I define Black male adult learners for this study as collegians older than 25 years having the following characteristics: (a) delayed college enrollment, (b) working full-time while taking classes, and (c) responsible for dependents other than their spouse (Goings & Lewis, 2020).

I obtained data using one-on-one semistructured interviews with 10 participants. Rubin and Rubin (2011) perceived that credibility in qualitative research does not necessarily require many interviews; however, there should be enough to portray diverse perspectives present in the sample. Moreover, to secure the trustworthiness of a study, the

data collected should reflect saturation as the decision point for when interviewing is sufficient (Fusch & Ness, 2015); the results presented reflecting that saturation was achieved with 10 interviewees.

Using Saldaña's (2016) recommendations, I organized and prepared the data for analysis by reviewing all participant transcripts. Saldaña suggested that researchers seek emerging codes during the data analysis process. I thoroughly reviewed all transcripts and reflected upon the information provided by the participants to begin my coding process. Data analysis began during the first interview and was ongoing as I completed each of the 10 participants' interviews. The data analysis and the research materials are kept confidential, password-protected, and secured for data storage on a computer drive on the study site's computer system to which I only have access.

I played back the audio recordings of the participants, transcribed the data into text, and coded the responses. I found that the color-coded words and phrases led to apparently overlapping patterns and themes. I organized the data into sentence segments and labeled the categories with the specific terms used by the participants. Using the coding process, I developed a description of the themes for narrative purposes. All the data were interpreted for specific meanings from the participants' lived experiences. I included the emerging themes in narratives to make sense of the data and to prepare for member checking procedures via email with the participants (Saldaña, 2016).

In answering the research questions, I thoroughly read and reviewed the interview transcripts from the participants in this study and reviewed the data that supported each theme. For this part of the analysis, I completed the second review of individual

transcripts on each participant, and I moved to the next one to connect new data to existing data that each participant provided. In this way, I linked the themes to the research questions. I highlighted the motivating factors connecting the themes to this study's framework. Through the SDT framework lens, I examined each participant's personal experiences and intrinsic motivation to promote positive interaction.

In this section, I briefly describe the themes that emerged from the interviews and data collection process. Patterns and themes supported by the data are in alignment with the research questions. Several themes emerged from this study in response to the interview questions. In interviewing these students, interestingly, they all fit the mold of autonomy, competence, and connectedness, which relates to the SDT provided in this study. I have grouped all themes using the guiding questions. I extrapolated descriptive data about success strategies these young men used to persist to graduation. In the process, I uncovered some of the challenges they overcame to help future Black male students succeed. I have outlined in Table 2 themes that correspond with each guiding research question for this study.

Table 2*Success Strategies of Persistence - Themes*

Theme	Number of participants referencing theme	Percentage of participants
RQ1: Self- leadership	7	70
RQ1: Mentorship & support systems	6	60
RQ2: Lack of peer bonding	4	40
RQ2: Time management & overcoming barriers	5	50
RQ2: Personal situations	3	30
RQ3: Motivating strategies	10	100
RQ3: Peer bonding/support	10	100

Research Question 1

The first question was, what college experiences do successful Black male students identify as key to persistence for degree attainment?

Theme 1: Self-Leadership.

This theme is the most prevalent academic strategy among these Black men and connects with their personal strategies for persistence. All the men mentioned being self-motivated, driven, and controlling their learning as a significant factor of persistence to their degree attainment; thus, self-motivation was consistent across participants.

According to Goings and Lewis (2020), Black male students are often successful in higher education due to their intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is more predictive for Black men's college completion than the influence of their peers, instructors, and parents (Goings & Lewis, 2020).

During the interview, P3 pointed out that his goals and motivations were to obtain a degree over a 2-year time period. This participant also talked about seeing his siblings

have success in earning degrees, and as the youngest of the siblings, he wanted to achieve as they had. P3 set his personal parameters for graduation and felt in control of his destiny. This participant had determined he would graduate without procrastination. P2 was motivated because he found enjoyment in doing math. He remarked that he enjoys solving problems and decided to pursue a math degree.

P4 indicated that he took the initiative to use the success center at the community college. He identified using the success center and all resources that the college provided to be successful throughout his college journey. Thus, P4 stated that he had the “internal motivation to seek help.” P5 expressed that “students should always do research as a requirement for accomplishments.” He profoundly stated, “being informed and staying focused will help you make better decisions.”

Most students indicated that having that inner drive and wanting something better for themselves boosted their chances of persisting to graduation from community college. P7 shared having the personal drive and motivation inspired him to excel in life. P8 spoke of how he focused his mind to not settle for less than his best. He admitted to being an organized, serious person pursuing a degree for a better life and “to put food on the table.” P8 preferred the pursuit of a full degree even if a first step was pursuing a certification. P8 mentioned the “certification will get you in the door, but the degree will get you a managerial position.” P10 considered himself to be very driven despite some challenges he faced early in life. He emphatically stated that “I can’t” was not in his vocabulary. He believed in “I’ll try to do it on my own.” P10 always believed in having a “Why” or purpose for a better life.

Theme 2: Mentoring and Support Systems.

Most of these men connected to mentors and faculty as support systems. Having mentors and faculty support were significant factors to success for these participants. Some students in this study participated in a mentoring program for Black male students, the honor society, school clubs tied to their career paths, and other mentorships. Informal and formal advising, which are considered institutional factors, were among issues that led to Black male persistence, and advisors connected them to academic and employment resources (Johnson et al., 2015).

P4 stated that the mentoring program for Black male students at the study site provided the guidance he needed to be successful. P4 also mentioned that the mentoring program gave him the foundation to succeed as he saw first-hand how other Black male students who looked like him had finished college. The program gave him the mentality and drive to emulate other successful Black male students. P4 thought highly of the Black male mentoring program because he learned what it took to be successful through that program. P2 revealed that the mentoring program for Black male students taught him how to organize and manage his time. P5 added that this same mentoring program supported him on campus and in his personal life. P5 mentioned that this program taught him how to write an effective resume and cover letter and how to give a winning interview. P5 also praised how the program helped Black men communicate with others and prepared them for the workforce. The mentoring program for Black male students was influential in helping the students persist and be successful at the study site, preparing them for college studies and the workforce.

P3 was an honor student and expounded on how the Honors program helped him to persist in school. He mentioned that being in the Honors program taught him how to overcome challenges. He did not realize that the community college had such a program until program leaders invited and inducted him. He received a scholarship as part of the honors program. P3 interjected that the program taught him about maintaining high expectations and kept him motivated because he had to maintain a specific GPA to keep that status he was proud to have. Because P3's mother graduated from a university with honors, being in the Honors program provided him with the inner fire to persist. P3 was involved in several honors programs at the college, including a Greek honors program. P3 believed that being a member of these programs supported his conviction that he was doing the right things—these organizations gave him motivation and kept him focused.

P3, like some of the other Black men in this study, had great success through mentorship with faculty in these college programs. Some participants expressed that relationships with mentors who looked like them were especially motivating and welcoming. They felt these faculty members could identify with their backgrounds and perceptions of college. P3 mentioned, "it was a different feeling to walk into a room and see someone of color teaching a class, especially when very few students in the class shared the same ethnicity and background." P5 mentioned that one of his professors was very engaging and explained concepts to him in a way that he understood. Mentoring and bonding with faculty seemed to significantly impact this population creating an environment conducive to learning and persisting. P7 did not have a mentor at the community college site but had someone who had completed college and urged him to go

to college and get a degree. P7 stated that his mentor was an ex-coworker who had completed the same route in college that he was pursuing and mentored him through the entire three years to complete a degree at the study site. P7 spoke of having a mentor who looked like him to inspire and motivate success. P8 highly regarded having a mentor to help him persist. P8 mentioned that some mentors should differ from the mentees and not only look like the mentee. P8 stated that if mentoring brings out the best in someone, the mentor's background or race does not matter. He discussed that Black men should enroll in mentorship classes that they can consider "the fit for them in pursuing their college degree." He felt that students should know their value, and they can often learn about that from mentors.

Most students in this study indicated that socializing and engaging with other students served to be successful habits that led to persistence. Social integration and peer bonding in the mentorship programs helped them to collaborate more and encourage each other, as explained by P3. Some researchers attributed Black male persistence and collegiate success to cultivating positive peer networks on campus because they have peers that push them to succeed and provide support in challenging times (Carey, 2018; Goings & Lewis, 2020). P5 stated that making friends with classmates helped him to stay focused on studying as they would often study together. He mentioned that the engagement created a bond to prepare him for classes. P5 also mentioned that "getting to know your classmates can boost persistence because they can help you with what you do not know." He suggested that you should always surround yourself with others as they

may know what you do not know. Peer interaction can boost engagement for Black male students (Brooms & Davis, 2017).

Research Question 2

The second question was, what college experiences present challenges or barriers to persistence for Black male students? The following themes emerged based upon the participant's response to interview question two regarding challenges and barriers.

Theme 1: Lack of Peer Bonding.

There seemed to be a consistent engagement challenge among this population and other college students unless they were involved in an organization or membership. As with college dormitories, socialization can happen during breakfast, lunch, dinner, evenings, or common areas. Because this community college does not have a dormitory or housing facility for students, students found challenges with socializing outside of regular class times, on the weekends, and in the evening. P3 mentioned "meeting up with classmates at Starbucks to knock out homework assignments." P4 mentioned that having a Greek fraternity like 4-year colleges would stimulate engagement on and off-campus. P5 suggested forming study groups that meet off campus to initiate engagement. P9 mentioned that having workshops at different industries for workforce experience and engagement helped him persist.

Theme 2: Time Management and Overcoming Barriers.

P10 only had time during the day to collaborate with college peers because of his work schedule. As with most of the Black male students I interviewed, work played a significant part in challenges to persistence in the evening hours as many of them had

part-time or full-time jobs. P8 mentioned that it was difficult persisting because he worked full-time and had a full-time college schedule. However, he took morning and evening classes that fit around his work schedule. P8's story aligns with Jones (2016), revealing that Black male students navigated perceived barriers to balance work and school by adjusting to their work and school schedules and coping with the exhaustion.

Student's expectations are often inaccurate, making them less prepared to deal with barriers in college (O'Connor, 2017). P2 added, "you have to stay informed and know what is expected of you to persist." P3 expressed that "you can place unnecessary barriers on yourself by not knowing what to expect in college and what to expect from your professors." P3 mentioned the disconnect between student expectations and actual college environments. P2 suggested that students must practice time management to overcome barriers and challenges that may arise. P2 revealed that the Black male mentoring program taught him how to organize and manage his time using a time journal for each day of the week. In this program, he learned how to be consistent with time management. P2 talked about how time management in this program taught him how to carve out study time each day to persist. P5 mentioned that "you can overcome barriers by setting goals that you can actually execute." He also mentioned that pairing up with study groups or a study buddy can deter challenges to persistence. Most students in this study did not experience many college challenges or barriers that impeded their persistence due to their innate motivational drive to persist.

Some participants were able to overcome barriers by setting goals and executing time management strategies. The strategies they used to master the challenges included

prioritizing as they balanced work, school, and home. Moreover, they overcame barriers because of the nature of their character and innate drive to control their own learning. P1 overcame barriers by knowing methods of how to learn and anticipating expectations. Although he used networking, tutoring, and mentorships to overcome barriers, he felt that knowing how to learn greatly impacted his persistence and success. He indicated that if “you know how to learn; you can visualize or use hands-on methods to navigate your way.” P1 also attended tutorials to be successful. P3 mentioned that he had to prioritize his schedule each day. Work and school life balance was vital to his success. Although he admitted it was challenging, he mastered the balance using time management strategies and tenacity. P8 exercised planning throughout his college years at the study site. P3 was always an organized person but said he “had to juggle school, work and home.”

The following themes emerged based upon the participant’s response to interview question three:

Theme 3: Personal Situations.

Personal situations seemed to have a significant impact on barriers that these young men faced. P7 had many challenges that he would eventually overcome. Being an adult learner, he was going through a divorce and was unable to see his children during some periods of college. At times, he did not have the funds left over to be the provider that he wanted to be. He was barely making it on his own. His story contributed to the realness of unpopular personal situations that Black men can encounter in college. P7 lamented about having only \$10 left at the end of the month after paying bills and trying to survive. He often slept in his truck and used the college’s facilities because the drive

from his home to school was quite a distance. He mentioned that sometimes he did not eat. However, things changed when he graduated from the process technology discipline at the study site and landed a great job in process technology at a significant company. Despite his early challenges, he was very grateful for persisting through the tough times in college to obtain a degree to do better for himself and his kids. P7 accomplished the goal of obtaining a degree and provided for his kids after becoming a homeowner. He was proud to have only his name on the homeowner's title.

P8 described one of his challenges as being a welding student receiving multiple burns from the welding fire/sparks. In welding, "even paying close attention, sometimes you will get burned," he lamented. P8 admitted that burns were very challenging as far as his willingness to stay the course. He also admitted that the heat from the welding fire was a challenge as well. However, he had set his mind to persist, and he never gave up. P8 was also an adult learner who experienced a 15-year gap in education before attending the study site. He talked of having fears of going back to school prior to enrollment. He persisted because he wanted to do more for himself and his family.

P10 was an adult learner that had been out of college for 6–7 years. He decided to go back to college after being displaced from New Orleans to Houston during Hurricane Katrina. The move meant different racial demographics and a way to provide a better education. Being a Black man from a poverty-stricken, blighted area, this young man sought to make things different by changing his poverty paradigm as "not being an option" for him. P10 had a compelling story that evokes emotion. P10 endured many challenges mentally as he drew upon his experiences coming from New Orleans. The

challenges stemmed from his years of poverty while growing up, and these challenges propelled him to persist in college to live a better life.

Embedded in P10's mind during his college years were the images that he saw and endured during his upbringing. One example of this challenging image was him not having water in his household for 6–7 months and going to a friend's home to facilitate cleanliness and nature's course. His challenge was not tangible but remained in his mind grounded in poverty from his upbringing. He so desperately wanted to find a way to emulate his father's success, although his father did not have a college degree. P10 attributed his high school in a poor area as not adequately preparing him for college. Moreover, he endured peer pressure of clique activity, prevalent premarital activities, and teenage pregnancy, although he never succumbed to that life. He saw first-hand and said that "people who did not study or attend college struggled hard later on in life." P10 considered himself an outcast with his peers but a success in life because he adopted characteristics opposite his peers. P10 used his adopted positive characteristics as a rationale to persist.

Research Question 3. The question was, what are the personal motivating strategies that Black male students use for their successful persistence outcomes?

Theme 1: Motivating Strategies.

This theme seemed to be the most powerful regarding degree attainment. All 10 participants shared their top personal motivating factors for persistence. All participants expressed that being driven was high on the list. P3 shared that being self-determined and driven was important because it pushed him to succeed. He wanted to feel accomplished

and know that he had the right tools to promote himself in a career or in his community. P3 was intent on garnering respect and becoming an educated Black man with credentials. He mentioned that personal drive was inspirational. P3 is involved in community activities outside of the academic world and strives to be a leader who is impacting his community. P2 used a vision board. He described that he envisions the school goals daily, such as graduating with an associate's degree in computer science. P2 also wrote inspirational messages once a week on his home mirror so that each day on specific weekdays, he read it many times and would take in the power of words. He mentioned that words helped him to stay motivated to get through the day. He often wrote on the mirror, utilizing the time simultaneously with the time he set aside to brush his teeth and wash his face. P7 mentioned his motivation to do better and build a better life. He lamented, "sometimes you have to lose before you win."

Theme 2: Peer Bonding/Support.

All 10 participants concurred that social integration with other Black men in brotherhood was a significant motivating factor in their persistence toward a degree. This theme overlaps with key college experiences. Connectedness and sharing of ideas and strategies to complete assignments motivated the students. These students were especially motivated by seeing faculty and leaders who looked like them. P5 returned to college as an adult learner. He mentioned that the connectedness with other Black men and classmates who were much younger than him was very impactful. These relationships motivated him in areas that millennials excelled in while he struggled. He mentioned that although there was a significant age difference, they were able to teach each other. Unlike

his traditional-aged peers, P5 served as a mentor to his younger peers and, relied on the same young peers for support (Goings & Lewis, 2020). P3 mentioned that “surrounding yourself with friends that are working toward the same goals as you and those that want to succeed will keep you on track.” Connecting with peers and faculty who looked like him in the mentorship program helped P4 to become motivated when he noted their success. P10 evidenced intrinsic motivation by comments about graduation as a way to feel that he has accomplished a goal. In summary, internal self-determination and drive led to persistence in college for these men. P10 suggested that self-accomplishment, seeking new skills and learning all contributed to persistence.

Family support was an essential factor leading to persistence for some Black men in this study. Being the first to complete a college degree in their families and making their families proud were significant family factors. P3 mentioned that his family had strong values for education. His mom graduated with honors and recently received a doctoral degree. Having a family who believes in education was vital for him. P3 chuckled about competing for higher grades than his sibling as a motivator to his persistence. He summarized that surrounding himself with the right people, whether family or friends, is a motivating factor for persistence. P8’s wife and internal “fire” motivated him. He mentioned that his wife encouraged him not to give up because he had a son who looked up to him. P8 talked about how he grew up in a foreign country and vividly remembered how his mother told him before moving to America that education is the best legacy. His sister and the entire family encouraged P8 to stay in college even though he was an adult learner. The stories P3 and P8 gave align with

having life stability, family support and rapport with instructors as a foundation to success (Watts-Martinez, 2015). P7 was the first to graduate in his family, and this also gave him the willpower to persist.

Initially, I wanted to interview five of the 10 students who were graduates, prior participants of the former Black male mentorship program, and students who were participating in a diversity program along with the general population of Black male students. However, the Black male students I interviewed were different from those intended. I had not considered capturing data from adult learners. The list provided by the study site leader included a mix of successful Black men with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, with some in the Black male mentoring program. The mix of these young men provided detailed and diverse information. The mix included Black male adult learners, former Black male mentoring program students, a Black male honor society student, and the general population of Black men. The major themes that arose from the Black male mentoring program students were self-leadership, time management and the importance of being mentored by Black men. All participants met the essential criteria outlined in this study of Black male former or current study site students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. I changed the names and identities of the participants to protect their privacy.

The primary themes emerged from the responses of the research participants during separate interview sessions. There were 10 students selected for this project study. Student interviewees expressed that they persisted in community college despite multifaceted challenges and barriers. I conducted these interviews to shed positive light on the perceived factors that influenced Black male students in their quest to persist to

graduation attainment. I drew on Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT of intrinsic motivation. The individual interviews highlighted an antideficit approach to Black male student success. Each participant portrayed their success in persisting to graduation.

Discrepant Cases

The final process for assuring the integrity of this study's data was to ensure that there were no data that challenged the findings. In review, there were no data that contradicted or challenged the findings. Using member checking, I asked the participants to read and verify the data that I collected for clarity. I provided the transcript for each participant to review. I emailed the transcript to the participants. This method was instrumental in identifying any bias or misunderstanding in the transcripts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). All the participants agreed with the transcribed data. The lived experiences of the participants were congruent. Therefore, the data was not contrary to any themes that emerged from the interview process.

Evidence of Quality

I used member checking for evidence of quality. Member checking is a method used to improve the accuracy and credibility, avoiding bias in research (Birt et al., 2016). Thomas (2013) posited that member checks help verify interpretation. I used member checking by emailing the participants a copy of the transcript in a narrative format. The member checking engaged the participants in reviewing and providing feedback on the narrative presented to them from data analysis. I followed this procedure to address the accuracy of the data. To ensure the quality of evidence, I continually checked for accuracy in the transcripts and data interpretation. In the final step, I did not use a peer

reviewer to confirm the accuracy and quality of information as I did not want to expose any information that the participants gave during the interview process. Instead, I thoroughly checked for accuracy along with member checking.

Summary of Outcomes

I logically and systematically presented the study findings related to the problem, research questions, and the larger body of literature concerning the SDT. I presented significant findings on intrinsic motivation, time management, and student collaboration and engagement as key to Black men persisting in community college. In response to why Black men have low persistence rates, the results from interviews revealed that applying the principles of intrinsic motivation, time management skills, and social integration with faculty, peers, mentors can lead to persistence. All principles revealed are within the student's control. All study participants expressed positive perceptions they could relay to other Black men. The findings showed that mentors, faculty, family, and peers influenced Black men's motivation, although their internal locus of control was vital.

A significant factor that emerged from this study was overcoming barriers to persistence. P1 and P3 acknowledged that setting goals and prioritizing time were crucial to overcoming barriers. The study disclosed a call to action for future Black male students to be self-determined, organized, and adopt a connection with faculty, mentors, and peers. Being autonomous, competent, and connected with an inner drive to persist can lead to graduation attainment. Students expressed that peer bonding was significant as they are their brother's keeper (Harper, 2012). The students felt that their journey

would be less challenging if they had a tighter bond with classmates. Having a tighter bond and a positive relationship with peers and faculty significantly affect academic success (Bratton, 2018). Intrinsic motivation was a huge factor that these students felt they needed to display for improving their persistence rates as a population. The most specific intrinsic motivation was autonomy with students being in charge of their learning. Most students felt that they should be self-determined to succeed instead of blaming the institution, family, work, or others for roadblocks to success.

The lived stories of the participants in this study unfolded the plight of some young Black men as they endeavored to stay afloat of the mainstream in education and life. The persistence rate among Black male students must increase as researchers delve into their lived stories and find ways to uplift and support their wholeness as Black male students. The participants suggested that some type of self-leadership training or workshop would be beneficial in helping incoming Black male students focus on what matters most to help this population persist. One participant mentioned that the workshop or training should not be on leadership alone as it would question whom they would lead. He suggested directing the training to intrinsic motivation.

Collecting data on successful strategies of persistence for Black male students in this study could lend positive insights to future Black male students who hesitate to persist and complete degree attainment because of barriers they may face or perceive. From the data collection, I designed a 3-day training on persistence for Black male students in community college. I aimed the workshop to encourage Black male students

with developing self-leadership skills as a foundation for developing intrinsic motivation to persist.

Project Deliverables

Findings on increasing Black male students' persistence from this study indicate that Black male students could benefit from an ongoing workshop on persistence focused on improving intrinsic motivation for this population to persist. Therefore, to address this need, I propose self-leadership professional development training for faculty, mentors and administrators to facilitate Black male student persistence. I aim to implement the project from this study as a set of self-leadership strategies, and student supports for education professionals to positively impact Black male students. I will present this project on self-leadership skills for Black male students as a 3-day training for interested faculty, explicitly targeting Black male faculty and underrepresented program mentors and administrators. The results of this project may yield different perspectives of Black male students' behaviors and patterns that institutions need to understand when supporting graduation of this population. The strategies used in this project may help professional educators understand how to teach, embrace, engage, and support these young men.

Black male persistence issues continue to exist in higher education (Beale et al., 2019; Harper, 2012). The participants' interviews indicated that this population favored formal training on self-leadership, including time management and faculty engagement. The participants concurred that learning more on how to be more organized and connected would be beneficial to Black men in helping them persist to graduation.

Findings from the study indicated that a 3-day workshop on self-leadership could improve intrinsic motivation and time management skills, thus, providing a desire to graduate.

The 3-day workshop on professional development includes PowerPoint slides to illustrate self-leadership skills. On day one of the training, professional development educators will learn how self-leadership can improve Black male students' persistence rates. Day two content and activities consist of what Black men can do to take control of their learning by engaging in time management. Day three content focuses on faculty engagement and bonding. Each day will have activities and poignant videos that the professional development participants can present to the students for effectiveness. I have aimed the training to inform and educate the attendees on strategies and methods that may work best for the Black male population.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to examine the voices of Black male students in community college to gain an understanding of their perspectives on successful strategies to foster persistence and academic attainment. In this section, I describe the project, a rationale for the project genre, a literature review on the project's genre, a description of the project, and project evaluation and implementation. This qualitative study included 10 Black male graduates and current students from the study site who had a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The students play an essential role in their own ultimate college success (Harper, 2012). However, institutions must recognize and embrace cultural inequities and provide an environment for underrepresented populations to thrive and be successful. The students' intrinsic motivation, time management skills, and connection with faculty and peers contributed to their persistence to graduation attainment. The results led to a self-leadership professional development workshop for faculty and mentors with the aim of supporting Black men in persisting to graduation at the community college. All interviewees were self-driven and utilized their self-leadership skills to persistence.

Professional Development

The purpose of this workshop training is to provide professional development to education professionals to help students develop intrinsic motivation, time management skills, and bonding with faculty via mentorship that propels Black male students' persistence to graduation. This workshop training can create a supportive and

collaborative environment for Black male students, underrepresented faculty, mentors, and program administrators. Participants in the study expressed that their past experiences with time management of school, work and home at some point became challenging.

The goal of the project is for educational professionals to provide intrinsic motivation via self-leadership discovery to Black men in a friendly, informal environment to better serve this population of students. The overarching goal of this training is to motivate Black men to complete their degrees. Other goals include introducing Black male students to influential Black male faculty for intrinsic motivation and overcome challenges to persistence using a road map to success. The learning outcomes for the training include the following:

- Participants will be able to identify self-leadership skills that motivate Black male students to persistence.
- Participants will acquire increased knowledge of how Black male students can change their paradigm and recognize challenges to improve their overall success.
- Participants will learn to present time management skills to Black men for persistence.
- Participants will learn how to encourage Black male students to make connections with peers, stakeholders, and mentors, thus increasing student-faculty engagement and relationships.

The target audience for this training will be faculty, mentors, and administrators that will teach Black men the self-leadership skills at the study site to be successful. I intentionally targeted Black men having GPAs of 3.0 or higher for success strategies of persistence specifically to Black men with GPAs lower than 3.0. However, all Black male students will benefit from the success strategies. Underrepresented mentors, Black male faculty, staff, and program administrators will be invited to attend as well as participate as guest speakers.

The project includes a brief prework form for participants to complete to assess their prior knowledge of the material and their affiliation as a mentor teaching Black men. Next, there is a formative evaluation during the sessions to identify the main points of the workshop and a summative evaluation at the end of the workshop. These two evaluation topics are discussed in detail later in this study.

Rationale

The rationale for the project genre was to provide a well-designed self-leadership workshop training for education professionals to support Black male students' intrinsic motivation to persist. The education professional's strategies or methods of teaching should encourage students to believe that they are benefiting and learning (Edmonds, 2016). Most students have little or no knowledge of their learning path and expectations. According to O'Connor (2017), student expectations are often imprecise. The student's view of college success is quite different from the faculty's view. It is imperative that faculty attend professional development training to stay abreast of new learning options

providing support for inaccurate expectations students have that can lead to low persistence and graduation rates.

The problem addressed in this study was that Black male students had low persistence rates consistent with the national persistence rates. Most participants in this study had internalized success strategies to persist. Therefore, acquiring self-leadership skills is a bonus to students with a GPA of 3.0 and higher and a need for students with a GPA lower than 3.0 who may struggle with meeting the challenge of coursework. Acquiring self-leadership skills may present Black males with the motivation to explore options to stay in college.

The lived stories of Black men in this study are indicators of how much this population demonstrates courage in persisting as they endeavored to deal with struggles, challenges, and barriers, whether tangible or not. It is imperative to have professional development training supporting Black men to gain an understanding of Black male students' backgrounds and current situations to see how they learn, think, and behave in the face of challenges.

For this study, self-leadership, including time management and connecting to faculty, can play a role in helping to increase the persistence rate among this population. I commend these young men for persisting. It is essential to have, among professional faculty and mentors, Black men that they can identify with, who know or know of the struggles of these young men and can reach them so that they feel comfortable, welcomed, and know their expectations are reachable. The self-leadership training for faculty and mentors could foster student success and address challenges that Black men

face with persistence and degree attainment. The results of this qualitative study revealed that Black men could persist if they had the skill set of self-leadership, notably including time management and faculty and peer engagement.

I use the workshop's content to address the problem of Black male student persistence in community college by teaching Black men how to persist. In this workshop, I use self-leadership to change the trajectory of degree completion stressors. Practical professional development training involves the facilitation of material that addresses the student as a whole (McSweeney, 2019). According to the former program leader, the workshop material may contribute to the student's confidence level as they internalize academic information and skills to overcome barriers to success. Presenting self-leadership training is a step in the right direction toward ensuring engagement in social and academic networks. I will address the research problem through the training by providing recommendations to the degree-granting institution on how best to work with Black men on increasing their persistence in higher education. I will use Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT for the selection of the content and activities to present at the workshop. I address tenets of Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT, autonomy, competence, and connectedness in this training workshop as part of self-leadership. Self-leadership compliments self-determination as it teaches students to develop personal skills that put them in control of their own learning.

Review of Literature

In Section 1, persistence was associated with intrinsic motivation through the lens of Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT as the foundational framework for this study. They

defined the three tenets of the SDT for students as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. To continue addressing this framework, I conducted an additional literature review, focusing on the genre of professional development training. I conducted the literature review to identify ways educational professionals could assist Black men in improving their persistence by adopting self-leadership skills. Although limited literature on professional development exists, this literature review consists of 25 current studies published within the past 5 years, and four articles that are older than 5 years. For this literature review, I included peer-reviewed foundational work, and references from the past 5 years, and peer-reviewed Walden University dissertations to validate the genre of professional development.

The database search included Google Scholar, Yahoo, ProQuest, Walden's Library, Sage Journals, Educationnext.org, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), EBSCO, Google Scholar databases, Journal of Education (Jeep), and The Journal of Negro Education. To broaden the perspectives, the search included web-based articles embedded in Google and Yahoo. The search terms I used were: *professional development best practices, training/workshop development, Black males in community college curriculum, mentoring Black males, what teachers can do to boost student motivation, intrinsic motivation for Black males, effective professional development and curriculum, training materials for Black males in community college, supporting men of color in education, evaluation of training and curriculum, training and instructional practices, adult learning, self-leadership, student leadership in community college, and andragogy.* I reviewed scholarly articles, journals, books, and reports, combined with prior research

findings, and identified commonalities that fit the training's intent. Consequently, I chose professional development as my genre.

I reviewed the literature to identify ways that professional development could be effective for educational professionals to mentor, support, motivate, and assist Black men with improving their self-leadership skills. This genre is appropriate to address the problem and criteria from the theory used to guide the project's development. Thus, Black men can internalize information concerning the benefits of having effective self-leadership qualities that may positively impact their ability to persist with supportive faculty and leaders.

Professional Development

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) defined professional development as structured professional learning that results in changes in practices that teachers uphold to improve student learning outcomes. Professional development is appropriate for this project because it includes tools that education professionals can use to develop a Black male self-leadership curriculum and materials to increase the persistence and productivity of Black males, thus enhancing their chances of graduation. Effective professional development involves active engagement, content-based materials, reflection, sustained duration, and expert support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; McSweeney, 2019). Students frequently base their perceptions of college experiences on interactions with faculty members (O'Connor, 2017). Consequently, adequate professional development initiatives can positively impact the likelihood of Black male persistence and graduation.

This project study is theory-based, using Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT of intrinsic motivation to improve professional development. According to Hardy et al. (2019), this training informs professional development educators on how to help students discern the perception of what they currently know or can do, as opposed to what they need to know and will be able to do. The goal of this professional development workshop is to outline topics germane to Black male student persistence and success. This professional development training can raise campus-wide awareness of the needs of Black male students and how faculty can positively impact their learning patterns. It is important to present this training for faculty on Black male self-leadership skills to help students recognize their own self-leadership qualities and conquer barriers that impede their success. According to Guskey (2017), uncovering daily struggles for Black male students in community college revealed the need to provide training to internalize new ways of thinking and increasing the students' self-confidence.

Mertler's (2017) model and case studies on action research, similar to professional development works (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; McSweeney, 2019) used for developing research, align with the needs for onboarding of professional development training. Mertler's (2017) model outlines four important stages of action: planning, acting, developing, and reflecting as defined below:

- Planning: identifying the topic, gathering information, reviewing literature, and developing a plan.
- Acting: collecting and analyzing data.
- Developing: develop an action plan.

- Reflection: sharing and communicating results to reflect on the process.

I used Mertler's (2017) action research model to ensure effectiveness in communicating content to the professional development participants and focusing on self-leadership.

Professional Development Theory and Research

The majority of professional development programs created and implemented by higher education institutions are not based on theory (Meyer, 2013). Meyer (2013) further posited that professional development programs must aim to use theory as a base for faculty professional development to be viewed as an essential element. A combination of theory and practice is necessary to ensure educators are adequately prepared to meet the needs of the student, especially Black men (Goings et al., 2015). A key element to student persistence, is the faculty's ability to identify the needs of their students.

Traditionally, it is assumed that participants in professional development workshops will be armed with new ideas and strategies, which will then be replicated in the classroom (Girvan et al., 2016). However, their assumption is not always the case. Theoretically, professional development can be viewed from the lens of Guskey's (1985) model for teacher change. Guskey suggested that the professional development participants' beliefs only change after seeing a change in the students' performance. Seeing the students perform better can help the participants and the institution's stakeholders decide on further use and development of the workshop. The change that occurs after a professional development workshop or training is relatively slow and involves a lengthy process.

It takes at least 30 hours for teachers' mastery of a new technique (Payne, 2018). Professional development is an ongoing process that involves intentional improvements to help students reach their educational goals. The ongoing process has to evolve over time to be effective. Moreover, higher educational institution administrators should encourage teachers to participate in a trial period of implementation and coaching following a professional development training to ensure that they receive the support needed for growth (Payne, 2018). Teachers must continuously plan for the training to be effective.

Similar to Guskey's (1985) model, Girvan et al. (2016) asserted that ongoing professional development involves continuously planning, implementing, reflecting, and refining content to change student outcomes. By planning and refining the professional development workshop, participants can customize learning to accommodate the student's background, culture, and learning abilities. When stakeholders recognize the role of the professional development participants as change agents, the implementation of theory, research and practice in a workshop positively affect student persistence as the quality of teaching and learning improves with training.

Effectiveness of Professional Development

The students' lived experiences of motivation and drive to persist formed the recommendations for a professional development workshop on self-leadership. To keep students motivated, institutions need to implement professional development training for faculty and staff to accommodate the needs of the students. According to Guskey (2016),

professional development has five critical levels of information, which represent an adaptation of an evaluation model development. The five levels are as follows:

- Level 1: Participants' reaction. The trainers view the participant's reactions to the professional development experience.
- Level 2: Participants' learning. Trainers measure the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the participants.
- Level 3: Organizational support and change. At this level, the participant shifts in the educational setting. This shift could involve learnings aligned or misaligned with the mission of the institution.
- Level 4: Participants' use of new knowledge and skills. At this level trainers seek to ascertain if participants have any new learnings that could make a difference in their professional practice. This data can be gathered via questionnaires or semistructured interviews.
- Level 5: Student learning outcomes. This final level includes the impact the participant may have on students based on their learning. This level is crucial to ascertain how the learning benefits the student.

Guskey's (2016) five learning levels are vital to the success of the professional development workshop outcomes before participants transfer learning to the student. Similar to the five levels that Guskey outlines, the (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019) has a set of systematic processes that institutions should use for evaluating professional development goals. The CDC (2019) recommends that implementation, reaction, learning, behavior, and impact act as a guide for institutions to

evaluate professional development successfully Administrators can use the evaluation results suggested by the CDC to garner support, demonstrate successful outcomes to students, and make decisions about whether or not to continue using the content provided in training.

Other researchers studying evaluation of professional development included Van Waes et al. (2016) and Killion (2018). Van Waes et al. (2016) suggested that professional development should incorporate informal and formal opportunities to promote learning. They supported that practitioners should base effectiveness of professional development training on practice and research. On the other hand, Killion (2018) posited that professional development is effective if it measured, including measures of its merit, worth and impact. Killion also suggested that professional development must facilitate improvements to an existing program in order to be effective. Killion explicitly examined the strengths and weaknesses of a professional development's program to determine its effectiveness as well as the generation of knowledge and accountability the program offers the institution.

Using Professional Development to Support Black Males

According to Goings et al. (2015), there has been no blueprint for reaching and teaching Black male students enrolled in community college. Faculty must reach out to Black men to find out what resources and support they need to persist. For Black men to persist, faculty must be intentional in embracing and supporting them in this endeavor. Recruiting and retaining Black male faculty in mentorship roles can enhance support for Black male students in community college. Professional development is vital to improve

the way educators rethink, behave, and relate to Black men by shifting away from the previous view of deficit thinking. Goings et al. (2015) posited that there is an urgency and need for professional development workshops and programs to address the assets of Black men in higher education. It is incumbent upon the educational professionals to believe that Black men can persist and identify their strengths to propel them to graduation.

The potential of Black male teachers' interaction with Black male students can function to reimagine the Black male students' humanity in ways that counter their perceived inferiority and disposability in community colleges (Warren, 2020). Despite the scarcity of Black men in the teaching profession, researchers have suggested that these professionals can impact the lives of Black male students as they not only serve as teachers but serve as surrogate mentors and parents (Goings & Lewis, 2020). Mentors provide a special connection that encourages growth between two parties. According to Douglas (2017), mentorship is mutually beneficial as the mentee learns just as much as the mentor.

Most participants in this study expressed how mentors enhanced their life on campus and off-campus. The mentors gave them the guidance they needed in approaching academics and social circles to persist. The relationships they developed provided the direction they needed for guidance. Moreover, the mentorship included support that provided knowledge and space to discuss and address challenges in a safe and mutually supportive environment (Williams, 2017). Furthermore, results from the interviews revealed that with support and mentorship from faculty of color, Black male

students could envision success as a reality. Researchers studying ethnic, racial, and gendered teacher-student matching have suggested that when same race teachers instruct students of color, their learning increases as they respond positively to teachers sharing the same features of their social identity (Goings & Lewis, 2020; Waite et al., 2018; Warren, 2020). Black men thrive in environments that promote the academic and social success of Black male students with engagement by Black male educators.

Edmonds (2016) posited that social support, peer support, family support and faculty support are all necessary for student persistence and success. With increased faculty and support systems, engagement and persistence can improve. Moreover, it is important for Black male students to support each other by “building a brotherly bond.” Building brotherly bonds with support systems can influence student learning and success based on rapport, trust, and respect (Edmonds, 2016).

Using Professional Development to Enhance Black Male Self-Leadership

The title of my project study’s professional development workshop is self-leadership. Self-leadership is the process of motivating individual behaviors and thoughts to achieve self-determined goals (Uzman & Maya, 2019). Self-leadership training can help faculty with developing life-long learning skills for Black male students. Professional development training is more efficacious when extended over a long time period rather than conducted in single sessions (Torff, 2018). Having this training in an ongoing setting emphasizes life-long learning that the student can internalize. On many campuses, the burden is placed on the student to find ways to adjust to college life as well as finding their own engagement opportunities (Arthur, 2016; Harper, 2012). Harper

(2012) posited that administrators, faculty, staff, and students must explore options to identify engaging roles for particularly Black male college students. Faculty, staff, mentors, and administrators must participate in professional development to embrace cultural inequities and provide the environment and support for these underrepresented students and other minority populations to thrive and be successful. The role of the faculty is paramount, and faculty should welcome all students into an environment of enormous support (Edmonds, 2016). The student's persistence and motivational engagements are determining factors to their own academic success. This study disclosed success strategies that Black men can use to help them persist to graduation at community colleges. It is important that future Black male students receive information on self-leadership, as evidenced by the 10 Black male students interviewed in this study.

Self-leadership is a self-influence perspective about a person's own ability to manage, lead and control personal behaviors, as well as to develop strategies for achieving desired goals (Abid et al., 2021). Abid et al. (2021) relate self-leadership in similar terms as Deci and Ryan (1985). Abid et al. (2021) suggested that self-leadership is an intrinsic motivator. They posited that self-leadership is a dominant and powerful internal influence for direction and intrinsic motivation in relation to what needs to be done. Like Abid et al. (2021), Uzman and Maya (2019) suggested that self-leadership is intrinsic and motivates an individual's behavior and thoughts, enabling control over the person's inner world. Both authors view self-leadership as cognitive behavior and abilities with focused strategies. In essence, students can manage themselves using roadmaps to follow in different situations with life satisfaction. Konradt et al. (2019) had

a slightly different view and made some comparisons of interventions to view self-leadership. Self-leadership has positive psychology interventions that increase well-being and happiness.

Project Description

This workshop will include a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate best practices for developing persistence to be taught to Black male students. As a result of the findings from this qualitative study and literature review, I developed a 3-day training curriculum workshop on persistence. This workshop requires the inclusion (resources) and cooperation of the study site officials for diversity, Black male faculty, mentors, and pertinent administrators. There is existing support from other faculty to convene a workshop on intrinsic motivation to persistence for Black male students.

In this training, facilitators need an allotted time for the workshop to convene on campus in a multi-media video-conferencing setting room. The training will be delivered to faculty, mentors, and program leaders. The training resources will include a projector, nametags, facilitator's podium, paper, pencil/pen, computer, and award certificates. Each participant will receive a copy of the PowerPoint presentation as they enter the training. The facilitator will engage the participants with icebreakers, poignant videos, exercises, and activities. The training session will be free to the participants. I will enlist the assistance of faculty, staff, and students to help with the training, which will also give the faculty and staff insights on how Black male students can internalize the workshop information.

Potential Barriers

The potential barriers for this workshop would be finding motivational speakers to present at this 3-day workshop on a given day. Moreover, other barriers might include the reluctance of faculty or staff to participate as speakers for no additional pay. To eliminate potential barriers, I will use motivational videos facilitated by speakers and short talks such as “Ted Talks” for motivation and seek faculty already involved with student leadership. To seek buy-in with data from the study and information on how this workshop training can boost persistence rates among this population, I will present this workshop to the student success and diversity program administrators. To curtail the barriers with study site personnel, I will meet with the leadership and program directors to discuss the workshop and its benefits to this population and the college. With barriers removed, potential participants will receive email invitations with a prework survey/document. The prework document will determine the audience to customize the workshop training. The participants will need to RSVP in order to prepare for accommodations and award certificates. The facilitators will hold this workshop training in the Fall and Spring semesters for better inclusion.

Proposal for Implementation Timetable

The workshop training can occur at the beginning of the fall school term at the end of September or early October of the school year for 3 consecutive days. I have tentatively delayed proposal for implementation because of current altered operations at the study site due to the present COVID-19 pandemic. This professional development training outlines materials used for each training session. This professional development

project includes a PowerPoint to illustrate persistence skills to provide to this population. As referenced above, on day one of the training, professional development educators will learn how self-leadership, the SDT, preventing barriers can improve Black males' persistence rates. Day two content and activities consist of what Black males can do to become organized and prioritize their time to manage and balance their school schedules and personal life. Day three content and activities will focus on mentorship, peer engagement, and support systems. Each day will have activities and poignant videos that the professional development participant can present to the students. The trainers will inform and educate the participants on strategies and methods that may work best for this population.

The timetable will include a full 3-day workshop training from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. with a 10-minute break and a 1-hour lunch break.

- Workshop – Day 1 Self- Leadership, SDT, Barriers to Success
- Workshop – Day 2 Time Management, Setting Goals and Priorities, Mission Statements
- Workshop – Day 3 Building Relationships with Faculty and Peer Bonding

The role of the participant is to attend and internalize the information presented in the workshop. This workshop includes ways the faculty can change their approaches to Black male persistence. The faculty, mentors, and program administrators will have the opportunity to share with other faculty members what they have learned and grow exponentially. The participants will capture the motivational tenets and personalize the ideas to match the students' experiences. Moreover, the participants will acquire tools

and resources to teach students to overcome barriers and develop new initiatives to persist. Once the faculty practices the principles taught in the workshop, they will be able to teach students to take on new challenges, accept more self-determination responsibilities, and improve their own accountability to persist.

As a former facilitator for Franklin Covey, I have the foundation to create an intense workshop for students who want to improve their success strategies to persist. I will serve as the lead facilitator of this workshop. I will also invite three of my colleagues to serve as facilitators. Moreover, I will enlist Black male faculty and motivational speakers from the Black community to speak to the students.

Project Evaluation Plan

When planning any workshop, a preevaluation and post-evaluation must occur to know the audience and improve the content or long-term effectiveness. I will email a prework survey to the workshop participants to assess their understanding of the content presented. This information provides insight into their knowledge and barriers. Moreover, facilitators will use formative assessment throughout the sessions to engage participants and move them toward their learning target of persistence. Using the literature, I will develop a formative assessment. For example, faculty can ask students daily to list three things that they have learned, two things that they are curious about, and one thing that they do not understand (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Thomas, 2019). The formative assessments will be ongoing and presented to the participants to identify the main points of the daily workshops. As the workshop lead facilitator, I will adapt instruction on the second and third days of the workshop from the formative assessments. On the other

hand, I planned for summative evaluation at the end of the workshop to assess the level of learning (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013) and what elements could have helped or hindered the workshop. The summative evaluation will assist with the decision of continuing the workshop, and if so, in what way. The goal of the evaluations is for participants to have an opportunity to reflect on their learnings, transfer new knowledge, develop a better understanding of the content, and apply the material to teaching opportunities (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). Moreover, the goal of evaluations is for the facilitator to gauge the effectiveness and program objectives of the content presented for future workshops.

I will serve as the lead facilitator and the stakeholders include college faculty, including Black men, and other underrepresented leaders who serve in instructional and administrative capacities at the community college. Motivational guest speakers, study site mentors, and staff will also participate in the workshop. Social support is important, and when training sessions unfold cooperatively, instructors develop supportive relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

Project Implications

Local Implications

This workshop training may spur social change by highlighting Black male students' best practices that may directly influence their future success, thus, helping to change the negative social image of Black men. This training promotes an antideficit approach to Black male student success. This study sought to uncover success strategies of persistence for Black male students at the local community college. Locally, this study

revealed a need for increased faculty and student engagement through mentorships.

Moreover, the proposed training opens up discussion on social interaction programs for Black male students in the evenings and weekends. Stakeholders can promote social change by increasing the awareness of this population's needs that faculty and mentors can initiate.

Broader Implications

The results of this study could reveal pathways to foster academic as well as workforce success for Black men advancing positive community livelihood. The project results may support industries in hiring more Black male students due to their intrinsic motivation to succeed in college; the results bring to light their motivation and how well it could transfer over to upper-level company positions. Professional development trainers will highlight best practices in a 3-day workshop providing tools and resources to facilitate Black male persistence; the participants could transfer practices to stakeholders in the community.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The project that resulted from my study was a professional development workshop training. Hearing Black male students' lived experiences on persistence was key to developing the training customized for education professionals to respond to their needs. This study was intended to fill a gap in research that exists with antideficit approaches to Black male persistence in community college. The professional development training for faculty, mentors, and administrators is designed to assist Black males with intrinsic motivation success strategies to persist. Increasing faculty awareness and engagement can increase persistence and student success (Edmonds, 2016).

Project Strengths

This project has many strengths. The program will help Black men matriculate, persist, and graduate at an improved rate. The program is adaptable and cost-effective as there are no fees for participants to attend. The workshop project may be replicated and revised each semester as new issues and solutions arise. This training will add to the limited antideficit research that improves the images of Black men in society. Moreover, the project outcomes could add to literature on Black male persistence in community college. This workshop project will positively impact faculty and mentors as they teach Black men success strategies that can enable a mindset of persistence while removing barriers that impede their college success. As a result of this workshop, educational professionals will gain knowledge that they did not know about the success of Black men. Moreover, the Black male students will benefit once the participants teach the

methods provided in the professional development training. Lastly, this project may benefit the community college by the support material that may enhance the persistence rate of this population.

Project Limitations

Although the project has strengths, limitations are present as well. Limitations may include a lack of commitment from the faculty and mentors to teach the materials. Other limitations may include the curriculum direction of the administration in terms of teaching Black men. As a new program of diversity is being implemented, this project may not be as responsive to the needs of all diversity program participants, as this project focuses only on Black men.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem that compelled this study was the gap in practice regarding success strategies of Black male persistence. In completing this study, I would offer the following alternatives to address the problem differently based upon the work of the study:

- Hold orientations prior to the school semesters to give a brief overview of what students should expect from their college, faculty, and classroom. Holding these orientations may deter jitters and failed work due to low expectations and outlooks on what the student will face. Hold orientations once the student has enrolled in formal classes to ensure that they know how to navigate course platforms and programs for the targeted courses they are taking.

- Formalize a mentoring program that meets on campus and off-campus if needed to engage students that work during the day.
- Formalize local partnerships with businesses, the Black Chamber of Commerce, professional Black male societies, and the surrounding community to embrace students as they work part-time and full-time. Part-time and full-time employment are prevalent among this population. Establish internships for students to get a sneak peek at industry expectations. Establish business mentors for the students to shadow.
- Formalize the material covered in the professional development workshop to form a workshop for students. Formalization may stimulate further interest and conversations on success strategies that faculty and mentors can learn from students and continue ongoing engagement.

These recommendations can be altered to meet the needs of the students.

Moreover, faculty, mentors, and administrators can quickly implement the recommendations. I also thought of producing a white paper on success strategies but determined that it would not be as effective and would not meet the needs of this population as they need engagement. I plan to present the proposed workshop to diversity program leaders and student success leaders at the study site. Alternative definitions of the problem may include the following:

- An antideficit approach to persistence for Black male success in community college that would include:

- Strategies aimed at helping Black male students persist in community college.
- Successful interventions that lead to persistence for Black men in community college.
- Black male persistence success in community college.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

The knowledge I acquired by studying for this project was of immense value. Through my experience in conducting this qualitative research, I have gained knowledge of how and why Black men can succeed. I had the opportunity to learn first-hand from some very bright young men with positive futures. The lived stories that I was able to capture implanted in my mind the mental fortitude and drive that these men displayed despite challenging background and life in general.

On this journey, I had not anticipated the 4 years and 8 months that it would take to get to this point of the study. It has been a long journey, but I have learned so much on this journey about academic terminology and how to conduct studies. I have learned the importance of patience and discipline to complete this journey. With the assistance of my committee chair, I have learned what it means to be a scholar-practitioner and doctoral candidate. Completing this study has made me more conscious of what I write as far as giving an opinion versus confirming my statements with research.

In summary, this doctoral program has served as the impetus for me to learn about pedagogy, research, implementation, references, peer-reviewed studies, and how to

express my thoughts concisely. My topic is of interest to me, and I plan to continue researching to find gaps that need bridging for Black male students.

Project Development

The process for project development of this study required discipline and extensive research from a plethora of authors that highlighted the positive aspects of Black male students. Instead of researching the deficits and plight of Black male students as so many articles have displayed, I have a Black male son who is successful, so I wanted to highlight Black male success in education. As I developed this project, I did not know that so many Black men were returning to college after waiting many years after high school graduation. I read in research that this population has many adult learners, but it did not resonate with me until I conducted the interviews. Most of the participants were adult learners. I commend them for circling back to get the education that they may have missed because of financial reasons as they had finished high school. The interview's results showed that I needed to develop a workshop to showcase the success strategies to help future Black men to persist. I devised the professional development training for use at the study site and in mainstream tutoring programs.

Leadership and Change

Through my studies, I have concluded that leaders are made and not born. Influential leaders empower others to reach their goals. Leaders focus on road maps and determination for doing things right. Being an effective leader begins with assessment, knowing personal strengths and limitations, and discovering where and how to influence social change. Leadership is about setting boundaries and utilizing resources. To be an

effective leader, scholars must accept change that will eventually need to happen. As educators, it is advantageous to prepare for change and understand how to handle it. Influential leaders are prepared for change and build healthy relationships with their students and other stakeholders to influence social change. The 3-day workshop on self-leadership will teach the professionals to teach their students intrinsic motivation that places them in control of their own life.

Through scholarly development, I have learned methods and terminology that have positively impacted my scholarly intuition. I have employed critical thinking skills and a plethora of research skills to improve my capacity to promote social change. As a scholar, reading, reviews, analyzing, and gathering resources to create an extensive literary work has inspired me to research my project study's topic beyond this doctoral program. My topic is emerging and needs more attention in order to affect change in everchanging societies and community college.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

I have gained a greater sense of educational astuteness for the work I am passionate about as an educator. I want to inspire Black male students to learn from a student-centered view, with learning as a journey and not just a milestone to accomplishing a degree. I feel that it is incumbent as a mother of a young Black man to help those who may follow in his footsteps and as well as inspiring the Black men that I have interviewed. This workshop can be revised to accommodate other institutional settings, including universities with Black men that struggle to persist. This has been an

amazing journey to see so much positivity and vision in this population of men that members of society and the media stereotype, label, and frequently disrespect.

Implications, Applications and Directions for Future Research

In conducting this study, I sought to disclose success strategies of persistence for Black males in community college to help them persist to graduation. This study may facilitate positive social change by encouraging family members, faculty, and mentors to support Black men as they better prepare to overcome challenges to persistence to degree attainment. The family has a significant impact on persistence. These Black men can teach others how to persist and perhaps become mentors to future Black men. The success strategies will give them tools and resources to help others persist and overcome barriers. The results of this study could reveal pathways to foster academic as well as workforce success for Black men in the local educational setting for positive community livelihood.

Further study could include giving voice in an interview setting to the faculty, mentors, and administrators participating in the study to capture their engagement and understanding of Black men. The more connectedness and understanding faculty, mentors, and administrators are, the better the chances of having a lasting relationship with the students. Other possible implications could include providing programming for other diverse populations that struggle with persistence.

Allowing Black men to share their success stories for persistence opened them to vulnerability as they told their truth. The engagement prompted reflection from them about their experiences, whether bad or good, as they told their stories. However, this was

an opportunity for them to showcase their intrinsic motivation to persist without hesitation. I presented the findings from this study in a positive light without judgment to impact social change. The impact on social change stemming from this study opened my eyes to plight and strength. Some of the situations some participants endured only made them more robust by persisting. It was an honor to interview such uplifting men of color in society. Hearing their stories are an inspiration to others to persist and make the best of all situations. The Black men in the interview recognized that persisting to degree attainment is a means to providing a better life for themselves and their families. Persistence provided a higher socioeconomic status and implications for long-term success post-college.

Conclusion

In light of recent nationwide protests for Black Lives Matter, this study could inform research and institutions and the general population of ways to promote Black male success for the betterment of educational, social, racial, and economic change. Addressing Black male success includes improving their community college success, workplace success, and establishing positive community involvement. According to Anumba (2015), hearing the voices of Black men who are persisting in college can be significant because positive affirmations along with help-seeking behaviors could be part of a solution to address societal inequity of Black men by reversing the trend of negative educational outcomes for this population. This project study was based upon the results of the semistructured interviews of 10 high achieving Black men with intrinsic

motivation to persist in college and life. This project can add value to the community college's equity alignments as well as research literature.

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Appendix A: The Project

Persistence: Self-Leadership Success Strategies for Black Males
Professional Development Training Workshop

Day 1 – Self Leadership

8:00 – 10:10 a.m.	Introduction Continental Breakfast Welcome Expectations & Objectives Video – Principal Baruti Kafele Speaks to the Youth (10 mins) Leadership – Self-Leadership Activity – Envision Success Attitude of a Self-Leader Case Study Summary and Review – Self-Leadership
Break	10 minutes
10:20 – 11:50 a.m.	Theory – Deci & Ryan (1985) Self-Determination Theory Intrinsic Motivation Need for Autonomy – Self-Leadership
Lunch	One Hour
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Persistence Ice Breaker Self-Determination to Graduation Discussion – Success Strategies Challenges/Barriers to Persistence Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness (Theory)
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.	<hr/> Mission Statements Visualization Elevator Speech I Have a Dream – Activity Each One Teach One Summary & Review – Lessons Learned

Persistence: Self-Leadership Success Strategies for Black Males
Professional Development Training Workshop

Day 2 – Time Management/Setting Priorities

8:00 – 10:10 a.m. **Introduction to Time Management**

Goal Setting and Priorities
Smart Goals
Prioritizing Your Goals
Vision Boards
80/20 Rule
Time Management Matrix
Maximize Your Time To Do More

Break **10 minutes**

10:20 – 11:45 a.m. **Procrastination**
Why Students Procrastinate
10 Ways to Overcome Procrastination
Activity: Procrastination

Lunch **One Hour**

1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Using a Student Planner
Organizing Your Space
De-Cluttering
Dealing with Email
Managing Tasks

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Weekly Plan
Summary & Review – Lessons Learned

Persistence: Self-Leadership Success Strategies for Black Males
Professional Development Training Workshop

Day 3 – Mentorship, Faculty & Peer Bonding/Support Systems

8:00 – 10:10 a.m.	Mentorship Guest Speaker – Black Male Faculty Member Whom Would You Follow? Video – Leadership (10 mins) & Video Debrief Support Systems (Peers, Family, Faculty) Social Change Video – Ted Talks – Changing the Narrative for Black Males through Higher Education – Carl Patterson (18 mins) Summary and Review – Mentorship
Break	10 minutes
10:20 – 11:50 a.m.	Action Planning - Activity Action Plan – Following Up
Lunch	One Hour
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Support Systems/Collaboration Meeting Alternatives Collaborative Applications Instant Messaging & Chat Rooms
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Reflection Summary & Review – Lessons Learned Concluding Thoughts
Certificate Ceremony	

Materials: Medium size room with a max capacity of 25 individuals, Tables, Chairs, Internet access, LCD projector, Screen, Nametags, Pens/Pencils, presentation handouts, agenda, personal laptop with connectivity, flip chart, markers, sound speakers, whiteboard.

Transfer of Learning

Transfer of Learning component after training: Six-Months

On-site group meetings: Monthly

Online support discussion group continue, Blogs.

Slide 1

Introduction

Slide 2

Day One – Self Leadership

Facilitator will record information on a flip chart and place as Parking Lot

Slide 3

Facilitator will record answers on a flip chart

I will fulfill my duties as a facilitator to keep the following:

- A safe learning environment – Avoid making participants uncomfortable
- Timing and Pacing – Keep the program moving
- Breaks –10 minutes

Slide 4

Slide 5

Slide 6

Slide 7

Workshop Purpose

- The purpose of this workshop is to identify successful strategies of persistence for Black male college students. There is not enough research regarding this topic on the community college level. In a study that I conducted interviewing 10 Black male students on how they successfully persisted, the major themes that arose were:
 - Self-leadership (they were driven and self-determined to persist)
 - Time Management (they used time management skills and techniques to persist)
 Mentorship, Peer Bonding and Support Systems were impactful to their persistence.
- Ways for students to overcome barriers may include: social and family support, positive influences/mentors, academic preparedness, and support in the transition process from high school.
- The conceptual framework for this workshop will be grounded in Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) based on intrinsic motivational factors of persistence.

Slide 8

What is a Leader? What is Self-Leadership?

It is not about being popular. It is about working on yourself to be better, having integrity, recognizing change, accepting change, and taking a leap of faith to get to where you want to go next.

Leadership is a choice. Self-leadership is the student's choice.

Society use to view people as born leaders. If you give the average student information, guidance, and resources, they can become self-leaders by their own choice.

For students to become self-leaders in school and in their community, self-leadership requires that they do the following:

- 1) Establish attainable goals
- 2) Practice effective time management skills
- 3) Build trusting relationships with classmates, mentors and educators
- 4) Define their personal mission
- 5) Collaborate with other students
- 6) Be creative
- 7) Execute graduation plans successfully – understand the importance of bringing the goal of graduation to fruition.

I suggest that students devote two months to reflection and action for these self-leadership qualities.

How can they apply Self-Leadership? What is Self-Leadership? Self-Leadership involves leading yourself. It involves working on yourself and your skills. A self-leader learns to take responsibility and acts proactively. A self-leader influences his own thinking, behaviors, feelings, emotions and direction. A self-leader does not wait on others to guide his path. Self-leaders know their strengths and abilities as well as their weaknesses. They take positive actions to build skills and self-efficacy. What is your success story thus far? Find out what your students' success stories are.

Slide 9

What can the student do to focus on self-leadership skills? Next, we will take a look at Self-Determination, its components and why it is important to Black male students

Slide 10

Deci & Ryan (1985) Self-Determination Theory

This slide depicts Deci & Ryan's original SDT model in 1985 that will be used in this workshop. From here on out, I will refer to the theory as SDT.

- The best way to view this model is: It seeks out challenges and exercises of the student's capability to explore, learn and persist.
- Intrinsic motivation is self-directed and is something the student can use to persist.
- This study's conceptual framework will be grounded in Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT.
- Deci and Ryan used the SDT motivational model of persistence to provide a human action framework.
- Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed that all human beings can be motivated by the three innate psychological factors: autonomy, relatedness, and competence.
- This framework may guide research in understanding persistence gaps and identifying strategies of successful Black men by examining their own voices and expectations of college experiences.
- The self-determination model defines the three motivational tenets of persistence as:
 - Autonomy: People need to feel in control of their behaviors and goals. *It helps students control their own destiny instead of the institution. It helps them to take the initiative to be motivated to persist and graduate.*
 - Competence: People need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills for achievement, knowledge, and skills. *Students need to build their competence and develop mastery over tasks that are important to them. Situational challenges such as bad attitudes, negative peer support, low-income family situations, to name a few, can impact the student's competence.*
 - Connection or Relatedness: People need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to others. *Black males' sense of belonging affects whether they persist or not. They need to feel welcome and connected. Social interaction on and off-campus is key to supporting motivation. Relatedness helps students stay engaged. For example: Students who work on campus have better related experiences that can lead to persistence.*
- The reason I chose Deci & Ryan's theory over the works of Tinto, Astin and Bandura in the area of social and cognitive learning is that the SDT focuses on intrinsic motivation initiated by the student. The student is the driver of success.

- Black male students who are willing to work hard with extra efforts separate themselves from others, thus, contributing to a higher success rate. By demonstrating persistence, these students can experience the joy of intrinsic motivation as they check off their to-do list— even if it is challenging.
- I chose the model because Deci and Ryan (1985) focused on all human beings, including students, being motivated by three innate psychological factors: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. This framework has been used to understand the nature of intrinsic motivation in human behavior in educational settings. These tenets have motivated students to persist.

Slide 11

What is Persistence?

Students persist when they remain enrolled in a college until a degree has been completed.

How can you help them to persist to graduation? Discussion.

Slide 12

Slide 13

This is how your students can get results—beginning with self-leadership (motivation) to graduation.

Slide 14

Discussion

Discuss at your table and to the class your success strategies for students to persist to graduation?

How do you plan for them to stay on course?

What motivates them to persist?

What does graduation look like to them?

What has been your biggest challenge to persist? What is their biggest challenge to persist?

Slide 15

Challenges/Barriers to Persistence

- What are some challenges/barriers that students face when trying to persist?

- Our job is to figure out how to remove some of their obstacles along the way.
- How can we remove some challenges/barriers or help them remove them?

Slide 16

Deci & Ryan's (1985) Theory of Self-Determination

Why Autonomy Matters – Are your students in control of their own learning?

Giving students a role in deciding what their educational experience will look like can help with motivating them to persist. Having the need to feel ownership of behavior, having self-direction is what autonomy is all about. When students feel in control of their learning, they perform better. Students have to take control of their own learning, discover ways to develop skills to persist to graduate even if they have failed a couple of times. Teach your students to not let small failures define their future. They have to be the creator of their own future. They have to create their vision and deliver.

Students should envision themselves graduating, despite barriers and extrinsic factors that may impede their success. They have to have help-seeking behaviors to persist. They must take an interest in your class content and focus on what they can take control over. They must take advantage of opportunities for educational advancement by initiating their own learning. Students must be willing to ask for help when needed.

Take responsibility for their own learning. Take a lesson from Michael Jordan. (Read slide)

2) Next, take a lesson from President Barak Obama. Be confident. (Read slide)

Slide 17

Autonomy matters but:

- How can we help our students feel competent in their subject matter(s)?
- What strategies do we have that can help?

Slide 18

Why Relatedness/Connectedness Matters

Social Integration/Peer Bonding/Mentorship

- Staying connected in some way with faculty, staff, mentors, and administrators can help students become persistent.
- What do you suggest as an educator that students do to stay connected?
- Discuss at your table and debrief with the class.

Slide 19

Is there merit to the old saying “Give a man a fish...”? Why?

Slide 20

Take 10 minutes to reflect and write down the answers to this question. You can share if you like. Present this to your students.

Afterward, then think about how students can use this activity to think about their future and personal success.

Later on, we will develop a mission statement that can include these questions. You will then take the information back to your classrooms and have students do the same.

Slide 21

Success Strategies

When developing a success strategy, students should think about who they are and what is important to them. Ask students, “What does your vision look like?” What does graduation look like? How will they get there? These questions will help them focus on their success strategies, and keep them specific and in line with the results they want to obtain.

- Determine what is most important and where to start
- Decide what to focus on and what is less important
- Create goals – long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals

Exercise:

Suppose you need to explain your strategy leading to graduation.

Here is something to try: It is called the elevator speech

Suppose you got on an elevator and ran into one of your professors who asked you to tell them about your success strategy leading to graduation. If you cannot explain your strategy leading to your success for persistence and graduation in 90 seconds (the time it takes an elevator to travel from the top floor to the ground floor), then you do not yet

have a clear understanding or vision of your own success strategy or strategies to move to the next level. (source: Franklin Covey)

Here is how it works:

What is the initiative (graduation)?

Where do you start, and what do you focus on?

What is the plan for making it happen? (initiative)

Use the elevator speech to grasp a clear understanding of where students are going and how they will get there.

Apply this to your students.

Slide 22

What is a captivating vision?

- It can be your personal “why”
- It begins with the end result
- It is something you feel enthusiastic about

Now, In order for students to find their own voice and plan their path, they have to create it with enthusiasm and be able to see beyond the next school year.

For students, their purpose is to create a commitment to and enthusiasm for completing their classwork because they want to, rather than because they have to.

More specifically, their vision is crucial for creating their own path to graduation and beyond as it contributes to the following:

- A vision provides direction and an impetus for growth
- A vision keeps the focus on what is important to the student

A vision motivates students over the long haul

- A vision empowers students
- A vision evokes inner drive and spreads enthusiasm

Key Point: Your college has to have a vision to move forward – a sense of direction for the long term, and: Students have to have a vision for them to determine how they fit in to your classroom and the college environment. At this time, research the college’s vision and mission. Have students research the college’s vision. The college must have a vision for students and students must have a vision for themselves.

Have students complete the sentence in the slide on the first day of class – I have a dream that one day....

(source: Franklin Covey)

Slide 23

Slide 24

Workshop Questions

- Here are some questions to think about:
- Q1: What college experiences do successful Black male students identify as key to persistence for degree attainment?
- Q2: What college experiences present challenges or barriers to persistence for Black male students?
- Q3: What are the personal motivating strategies that Black male students use for their successful persistence outcomes?

(Answers may vary)

Slide 25

How do you perceive success? Do you create your own future? What is your plan to reach graduation?

Ask these questions to your students.

Slide 26

What have we learned?

Slide 27

Take 15 minutes to pair up and complete these questions.

Use this on a flipchart. Brainstorm what motivates you.

Slide 28

Ask students to write down what is holding them back from reaching their school and life goals

VIDEO: Ice Scraper

http://youtu.be/Jgq_IWCMUxs

At this time please click on the video link posted in the live chat (online audience) – Ice Scraper. *Google: utube ice scraper video kullix.*

(Let's watch what happens when this person works hard but is not very productive. This is a very short 40 second video) **(PAUSE)**

Debrief: How much time and energy did he waist on an unproductive activity?

On the flipchart, post an example of when someone working with you on a professional development project, that in the end, contributed very little.

End of Day One

Day Two- We will discuss ways students can manage their time effectively

Slide 29

Day Two – Time Management/Setting Priorities

Smart Goals

SMART is an acronym for a set of criteria that a goal has for it to be realized by the student. Student goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed.

- **Specific:** In order for goals to be achievable, the student must be very clear about what exactly they want to achieve.
- **Measurable:** It is crucial for goal achievement that students track their progress towards their goals.
- **Achievable:** A good goal challenges the student but is not unrealistic. A good goal is achievable.
- **Relevant:** Student goals must be defined with values and career and life purpose.
- **Time-based:** Students must set realistic deadlines for their goals. By setting a deadline or end date, their subconscious mind begins to work on that goal, night, and day, to bring them closer to achievement.

What can you teach your students about SMART Goals?

Prioritizing Goals

Time management is about more than just managing student schedules and time; for students, it is about managing themselves in relation to time. It is about setting priorities and taking charge. It means changing their habits or activities that they procrastinate on or fail to perform.

Students should not spread themselves too thin. They should focus on 3-5 achievable goals. When prioritizing, the student should choose goals that will have the greatest impact. A great analogy would be an ANT. An ant will go around, on top or through the intended target. Encourage students to have the tenacity of an ANT.

Visualizing Goals – Vision Board

One of the best visualization tools is a vision board. Students can simply find a book or magazine, cut out pictures that they want to achieve, glue them onto a piece of poster board, and place that board somewhere that they can view it several times a day. Or, they can use sticky notes to post on a mirror in their bathroom or room. (Brief discussion on vision boards)

The 80/20 Rule

The 80/20 rule, also known as Pareto's Principle, states that 80% of your results come from only 20% of your actions. Students can take 20% of their morning to plan 80% of their day.

The Important/Urgent Time Management Matrix

Students should manage their time effectively. To do this, they need to distinguish clearly between what is urgent and what is important:

- **Important:** These are activities that lead to achieving goals and have the greatest impact on life.
- **Urgent:** These are activities that demand immediate attention but are not necessarily important. Ex: a ringing phone.

This matrix was used as the Important/Urgent Matrix by Stephen Covey in his 1994 presented in The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. The Urgent/Important Matrix is a powerful way of organizing tasks based on priorities instead of urgency. Time Management Matrix Activity: The following Urgent/Important Matrix will be drawn on a flip chart for participants to add to the matrix.

Time Management Matrix

- 1) **Urgent And Important:** Activities in this area relate to dealing with critical issues as they arise and meeting significant commitments. *Perform these duties now.*
- 2) **Important, But Not Urgent:** These success-oriented tasks are critical to achieving goals. *Plan to do these tasks next.*
- 3) **Urgent, But Not Important:** These chores do not move you forward toward your own goals. Manage by delaying them, cutting them short, and rejecting requests from others. *Postpone these chores.*
- 4) **Not Urgent And Not Important:** These trivial interruptions are just a distraction and should be avoided if possible. However, be careful not to mislabel things like

time with family and recreational activities as not important. *Avoid these distractions altogether.*

Slide 30

Students may procrastinate for the following reasons:

- No clear deadline from faculty for class assignments.
- Inadequate resources available (time, money, information, etc.).
- Don't know where to begin – sometimes getting started is the hardest task.
- School project or assignment feels overwhelming – Information and assignment overload.
- No passion for the subject.
- Fear of failure.

Ways students can overcome procrastination

The student's ability to select their most important assignment, and then work on that assignment to get it done both quickly and thoroughly, will probably have the greatest impact on their success than any other quality or skill the student can develop. Students need to have and set clear priorities in getting important tasks and assignments quickly finished.

Here are some ways to get students to overcome procrastination.

- **Do it now.** Postponing an important task that needs to be done only creates feelings of anxiety and stress. Do it as early in the day as you can. Find a productivity time and stick to it.
- **Ask for advice.** Asking for help from a mentor, faculty member, or tutor can give the student great insight on where to start and the steps for completing an assignment or project.
- **BREAK IT UP.** Break large projects and assignments into chunks, and then into actionable steps.
- **Obey the 15-minute rule.** To reduce the temptation of procrastination, each actionable step on a project or assignment should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.
- **Have clear deadlines.** Students should have clear deadlines from faculty and set clear deadlines for themselves. Each project or assignment that is challenging or has a specific due date should be written in their planner.

- **Give a reward.** Students should reward themselves after completing a milestone. It will provide positive reinforcement and motivate students toward their goals.
- **Remove distractions.** Students need to establish a positive working environment that is conducive to getting their work and homework done. Remove any distractions, especially during take-home exams.

Discuss ways students can overcome procrastination

Discussion: Discuss at your table ways students can overcome procrastination and share with the class. (Answers will be put on a flipchart)

Let us break for lunch. When we return, we will discuss how students can successfully use a planner.

LUNCH BREAK

Slide 31

How to Use A Planner

- 1) Task Dump – List school assignments, projects, work, family events, errands, exercise, etc.
- 2) Prioritize – Sort and prioritize alphabetically – A (top priority), B (next), C (next). Then prioritize each letter with a number – A1, A2, A3, etc. Select the most urgent of A,B,C.
- 3) Follow-up – Keep track – Completed, move forward, delete, in progress.
- 4) Review – Review schedule, Update, Check Off, Start a new day with the list from previous day assignments that have not been acted upon.

Encourage students to use a student planner on the first day of class for better productivity.

Slide 32

Participants will fill in the three blank spaces.

Teach students to be organized. Have students complete a discussion board on being organized.

Slide 33

Discuss with students how to:

- Declutter their workspace and home school space
- Teach students how to organize their email
- Teach students how to manage tasks

Weekly Plan

- Have students write their Weekly Plan (How will they start their week)

Review Time Management

End of Day Two

Prepare for Day 3 – Mentorship, Faculty Bonding, and Support Systems

Day Three – Mentorship, Faculty & Peer Bonding/Support Systems

Slide 34

Slide 35

(The faculty member will speak on his experience with Black male students. The faculty member will entertain Q & A)

Slide 36

Discover what is unique about the person you describe?

Now, we will take a look at an inspiring video of a true leader who acted positive in the time of hardship.

Video Debrief

What are some support systems you can discover for your students?

Slide 37

- This workshop may facilitate positive social change by encouraging educators to support Black male students as they prepare to overcome challenges/barriers to persistence for degree attainment.

- The results of this workshop could reveal pathways to foster academic as well as workforce success for Black male students in the local educational setting for positive community livelihood.
- This workshop may spur social change by highlighting what educators can do to encourage Black male best practices that may have a direct influence on future Black male success, thus, helping to change the negative image of Black men.
- Slide 38

Activity: Write down 3 things, that if you could change, would make a powerful difference, and those will be your actions plans to support Black male students.

Slide 39

Lunch Break

Slide 40

Slide 41

Support Systems/Collaboration – Alternative Ways to Communicate

Discuss alternative ways students can meet to collaborate.

Slide 42

Ask students: How do you perceive success? Do you create your own future? What is your plan to reach graduation?

Slide 43

This workshop project may help educators encourage Black male students to find and examine their own voice and expectations of college experiences.

Once Black male students learn how to navigate the college environment, become proactive socially and academically, chances for persistence and graduation may become more of a possibility. Addressing Black male success includes improving their community college success, workplace success, and establishing positive community involvement. Certificate ceremony. Workshop Close.

Slide 44

Slide 45

Appendix B: Interview Guidelines, Protocol, and Questions

Prior to Interview

1. Design interview questions for the purpose of the study and participant feedback.
2. Identify participants and their essential background information.
3. Ask for the consent form to be agreed upon by the participant prior to the interview.
4. Arrange the date and time of the interview with participants.
5. Briefly describe the interview and process to the participant
6. Inform the participants that the final data analysis will be provided to them in writing to verify the information they provided.
7. Request the participant's permission to record the interview.
8. Check digital recorder on iPhone.
9. Conduct voice tests of digital recorder prior to the interview.

During the Interview

1. Provide background information on the project at the beginning of the interview.
2. Reconfirm participant's permission to record in confidentiality and provide a transcript.
3. Take notes throughout the recording process.

4. Identify action items that need to be followed up and request permission from the participant to follow up.
5. Thank the participant for taking time out of their busy schedule to interview with me.

After Interview

1. Write up contextual interview notes and transcribe digital recordings.
2. Complete the information and organize data.
3. Identify themes and code to determine commonalities and patterns.
4. Email a completed copy of the data analysis to each participant to verify the accuracy of the information and credibility of my interpretation without bias.
Request updated responses from participants for the accuracy of their input.
Update the transcript.
5. Request any additional information or clarification of information.
6. Enter factual content information such as themes, patterns, and codes from the interview in an organized manner.
7. Save the transcript and notes in Microsoft Word.

Interview Protocol

Research Study: Success Strategies of Black Male Community College Students

Interviewer's Name: Alvenetta C. Wilson Participant's Name _____

Interview Date:

Interview Time:

Interview Mode: Telephone or Zoom Video if desired by participant

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to participate in this interview process. This interview is strictly voluntary. Your identity and responses will remain confidential. Please let me know if you have any questions prior to the interview or the process. The following twelve questions are focused on your success strategies at this community college. Are you ready to begin the interview?

Interview Questions:

Demographic Information

1. Please confirm your age (Participants must be 18 years old or older)
2. Please tell me about your educational background.

What is your primary reason for deciding to attend a community college?

ROI: College Experiences

1. Are there college experiences that you can identify as being key to persistence for degree attainment? If yes, please explain. If no, can you think of experiences that would support persistence to degree attainment?

2. Describe any positive effects mentors or peers have on your abilities to succeed in college? Do you feel the mentor or peer effects are unique to your experiences as a Black male student? If yes, please explain.

RQ2: Challenges/Barriers

1. What challenges/barriers have you experienced or are currently experiencing that impede persistence as a Black male student? Are there strategies that you used or currently use to master your challenges/barriers? If yes, please explain.
2. What programs/activities/events have you experienced or are currently experiencing that improve persistence as a Black male student? Are there strategies that you used or currently use to master the programs/activities/events? If yes, please explain.

RQ3: Personal Strategies of Persistence

1. Are there personal motivational factors that you use for successful college persistence? If yes, please explain.
2. Please tell me about any college preparation activities you may have had that led to your persistence. How did you learn about the college preparation activities that you are identifying?

Reflective Question

1. Describe your mindset for success? How might your mindset impact the persistence success of Black males enrolled in community college in the future?

Concluding Questions

1. What advice would you offer future Black males attending a community college?
2. What recommendation(s) would you make to the college to improve Black male success?
3. Is there anything further you would like to share regarding your experiences at the community college?

Thank you for your time. You will receive a transcript of the interview for confirmation of your accuracy. Furthermore, please remember that your name will remain confidential.

(Note: The same interview questions will be changed to past tense for those who have already graduated).