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The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness Preparation and Persistence

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The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students:
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A Co-Authored Dissertation submitted to
The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

May 2024

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study investigates the multifaceted factors influencing the postsecondary success of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students, with a particular emphasis on understanding the impact of college readiness preparation and persistence. Employing a comprehensive research design, the study integrates semi-structured interviews with high school teachers and counselors, and Black and Latino male freshmen and sophomores to provide a holistic exploration of the challenges and opportunities within the educational journey. Situated within an interpretive phenomenological paradigm, this study elucidates the experiential realities and viewpoints of the subjects, thereby illuminating the socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors shaping their trajectories in higher education. Through thematic analysis, the research aims to uncover the unique insights shared by both educators and students, highlighting the interconnectedness of their experiences. The primary objective of this doctoral thesis is to ameliorate the gap between theoretical inquiry and practical application by providing actionable guidance tailored for educators, counselors, and policymakers. The aim is to augment college readiness initiatives and bolster persistence rates specifically among historically marginalized Black and Latino male students. By integrating the voices of both students and educators, this research seeks to foster a more inclusive and informed approach to addressing the educational inequities encountered by this demographic.

Acknowledgements

Team True CASHE is grateful to Dr. Woodhouse, Dr. Mershon, and Dr. Manning for their unwavering support and guidance throughout our journey. Alexandra Gresick, your organizational skills, and prompt response are highly appreciated. Dr. Woodhouse and Dr. Manning, your coaching and meticulous review of our writing have been invaluable. Thank you for being a part of our journey.

Molly Croghan

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family for supporting me throughout this process. First, to my husband, Andrew Klingler, for his unwavering support, patience, and understanding throughout this journey. His encouragement and belief in me have been the driving force behind my perseverance. I am also immensely grateful to my loving family, parents, and siblings, for their constant encouragement, support, and understanding during the demanding times of this doctoral pursuit. Their love and support provided me with the strength and motivation to overcome obstacles and achieve this significant milestone. Lastly, to my fellow research team members, whose dedication, expertise, and collaborative spirit have enriched every aspect of this dissertation journey. I extend my deepest appreciation to each member for their willingness to share knowledge, provide constructive feedback, and navigate the complexities of research with diligence and passion. Together, we have demonstrated the power of collective effort and collaboration in advancing knowledge and making meaningful contributions to our field.

Ebonie Davis

First, I would like to give thanks to God for giving me guidance and the ability to achieve my goals. Secondly, words cannot express my gratitude and appreciation to our Academic Advisor, Dr. Shawn Woodhouse. Dr. Woodhouse, you pushed us, guided us through the trenches and helped us to become better academically, professionally, and personally. The countless hours you spent with us will never be forgotten. Your heart for your students and education is truly admirable. I am truly grateful for you. Sincere appreciation to our Dissertation Chairperson/Mentor, Dr. Norris Manning. Thank you for providing direction, a listening ear, a keen eye for edits and details. Dr. Manning, you also helped us develop and provided great insight throughout this process. To our final Committee Mentor, Dr. Kenton Mershon. Dr. Mershon, thank you for serving as a member of our committee. You provided helpful insight and challenged us to think more critically. This endeavor would not have been possible without the wonderful team members of Team True CASHE. I have thoroughly enjoyed this journey with you and appreciate you all.

I could not have undertaken this journey without the support of my amazing husband, Carl and our children (Carl, Chase, Carlie, & Samone). You all endured this journey with me. You allowed me the time and space to write, listened to me discuss thoughts out loud, and extended grace to me when I could not be completely present for you. Thank you for your support and love. I love you all so much. I am also grateful for my mother. You have been there since the very beginning and nothing has changed. Thank you for your support throughout this journey. Finally, to my family, friends, sisters, and brothers. Thank you for your support. I am truly grateful for you.

Janci Finkley

This work is dedicated to my family. The support, prayers, and encouragement that I received during this process really made a tremendous difference. This Doctorate Degree is earned in memory of my late parents, the Rev. Brenda, and Rev. Ben Bogan, two awesome people of God who imbued in my brothers and me the strength to endure. Where would we be today without your love, example, and prayers that still motivate and guide us? I dedicate this to Monica, my loving wife of 30 years, thanks for your support and patience during this journey. Also, to my younger brothers, Pastor Jamal Finkley and Dr. Jacqnaii Finkley, your prayers and brotherhood lifted me in some tough moments and reminded me of the importance of mentoring and coaching as I recounted our lives in school, sports, the A.G. Gaston Boys Club, and church. Certainly, to all my teachers, coaches, Bro. George E. Washington (the former executive director of the Boys Club), Brothers of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated, Bishop Sylvester Williams Sr., pastors and parishioners of the Sensational St. Louis District and my Coleman-Wright Church family, thank you for sharing so richly in my life. Lastly, I dedicate this to my oldest and youngest children Jarrick and Jhenesis, and my three awesome college students Jalin, Janci Jr., and Jancia. I also thank my wonderful nephews Justice (a student-athlete at the University of Texas), Justin, Jersey, and my beautiful niece Jaden for inspiring me to keep lifting as I climb. I believe mom and dad would be proud.

Zehra Khan

I am incredibly grateful to the remarkable individuals who have supported me every step of the way in completing my doctoral dissertation. First and foremost, I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my father Mohammed Zainudding Khan Jaweed,

whose belief in my abilities and constant encouragement gave me the strength and determination to persevere through the challenges of this academic journey. I also want to express my deep appreciation to my mother Rafiunissa Begum, whose boundless patience, understanding, and support have fortified and strengthened me throughout this arduous process. My parents' selfless sacrifices and unwavering encouragement have propelled me toward this significant milestone, and I am forever thankful for their love and guidance.

I am tremendously grateful for my husband Dr. Ajaz Khan, whose unwavering support, profound understanding, and love sustained me through the long and demanding hours of research and writing. His persistent belief in my capabilities has been a driving force, and I am deeply thankful for everything he has done to enable me to fulfill my academic aspirations. Last but certainly not least, I want to acknowledge my daughter Mahira Khan, whose boundless love, infectious laughter, and faith in my abilities have been a constant source of motivation and inspiration, propelling me toward academic success. Her warm embraces have provided immeasurable comfort and inspiration during the most trying times. I am humbled and deeply grateful to have the privilege of being her parent.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all my siblings and family who have supported and believed in me, whether near or far. Your support, encouragement, and love have made this dissertation possible, and I am deeply grateful for every one of you.

Yvette Antoinette Levy

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mentor, Dr. Norris Manning, for his invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and profound expertise throughout the

entire journey of this dissertation. Your insightful feedback and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this research. I am also indebted to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, Dr. Kenton Mershon, and Dr. Norris Manning for their constructive criticism, scholarly advice, and time devoted to reviewing and improving this work.

Special thanks to my parents, Bill Levy and Barbara Levy-Gaines, my siblings LaVonne Levy, Chelsea Hatcher, and my nephew Noah Hatcher whose love, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the cornerstone of my academic pursuit. Your unwavering belief in me has been a constant source of strength and motivation. I would like to extend my gratitude to my dear friend Terry Buford and my co-authors who have supported me throughout this journey, offering their encouragement, understanding, and occasional distractions when needed. I am deeply grateful to Team Wilkinson for their encouragement, understanding, and camaraderie. Their companionship has made this journey memorable and enjoyable.

I offer my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Paula Knight, Dr. Kay Royster, Dr. Carol Whittier, and Dr. Kelvin Adams. Your support and encouragement have been invaluable, and I am truly grateful for your presence in my academic journey. To all those mentioned and countless others who have contributed to this endeavor in ways seen and unseen, I offer my sincerest thanks. Your support has been indispensable, and I am profoundly grateful for your presence in this endeavor. I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of the late Reverend Bernard Brown, whose wisdom, guidance, and unwavering belief in my abilities continue to inspire me, even in his absence. Though he is no longer with us, his impact on my academic journey and personal growth remains indelible. He played a

pivotal role in shaping my passion and compassion for humankind and instilled in me the perseverance to overcome obstacles and pursue excellence. While he may not be here to witness the completion of this work, his influence lives on in every word written and every idea explored. I am forever grateful for the profound impact he had on my life and academic endeavors. Though physically absent, Reverend Bernard Brown remains a cherished presence in my heart and mind. This dissertation stands as a testament to his enduring legacy and the profound influence he had on my academic journey. Lastly, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the participants who generously shared their time and insights, without whom this study would not have been possible.

Evans L. Mudanya

I would like to acknowledge my academic advisor Dr. Shawn Woodhouse for her tireless efforts that ensured that I'm getting the right advice I need to be successful. I thank her for keeping track of my work and pushing me to accomplish this dissertation on time. Immense gratitude goes to the mentors; Dissertation Chair Dr. Norris Manning and Dissertation Committee Member Dr. Kenton Mershon for their dedicated effort to ensuring that I followed the right etiquette for writing and getting me through this far. I will forever be indebted to my True CASHE Team for the collaborative nature we undertook to accomplish this endeavor. Each one of them brought their best to this work exhibiting their passion for their work as educators that will transform lives beyond the confines of their careers.

Lizbeth Román

This work is dedicated to all the students I have met and been fortunate to work

with during my career, you inspire me. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your education journey.

I want to acknowledge my parents, mamá y papá, jamás les podré dar las gracias que se merecen. Todos mis logros, son sus logros también. Con orgullo llevo conmigo sus historias y ejemplos de valor y trabajo duro. Me siento sumamente orgullosa de ser su hija.

To my chosen family and friends, thank you for your constant love and encouragement throughout this program and dissertation process.

To our dissertation committee, Dr. Woodhouse, Dr. Manning, and Dr. Mershon – thank you for the time, guidance, and ongoing feedback you provided us to ensure we not only completed the program but had an end product that was meaningful and impactful. To my team, I am honored to have worked on this research project and undergone this dissertation journey alongside you all. My sincere appreciation for your patience, support, and commitment to this work. To the teachers, counselors, and students who participated in our research process – thank you for sharing your stories.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Various groups of people are privileged to have the opportunity to experience a better life through education, while others encounter many challenges. For those with limited experiences to support their college aspirations, it can be more difficult to enter the collegiate environment and be prepared to learn and succeed. This world of limited opportunities and experiences deters individuals from achieving their highest potential. Consider the following stories of Jesse, a young Black male, and Jose, a young Latino male, which illustrate how the availability of opportunities, resources, and experiences can drastically change one's trajectory.

Jesse grew up in rural Mississippi as the oldest of five siblings. His father died when he was a toddler, and his mother prioritized other hobbies and tasks. Consequently, he navigated life through the struggle of his decisions and the limited counsel of his mother. His mother, who had a high school education, seldom offered to help with homework. She worked two jobs to provide for their basic needs, supplemented by welfare. Jesse's decisions were also forged by a community distrust for law enforcement, which he considered the norm. After a few years of such dysfunction, he moved and lived with his aunt and grandmother in St. Louis, Missouri. There, he found a new world of possibilities, as well as stability and comfort. He received exposure to educated African American professionals and the availability of internships. He also acquired a new perspective on law enforcement and an ability to help people, drastically different from his previous life in Mississippi. The geographic area in which he previously lived was infamous for the unfortunate fate of young Black males who were only expected to die an

early death or be relegated to life in prison! These two options received a forceful stamp of “DENIED” when Jesse graduated with high honors from high school and college.

Eventually, he received an opportunity for a career in law enforcement.

Meanwhile, Jose, born to parents of farm laborers on the sunny hills of California, watched his mother and father work tirelessly to provide for his family. Even at a young age, Jose was aware of his community and witnessed how the majority of Latino males adopted the same formalities. The community norms appeared to promote gainful employment as soon as their physical bodies were capable. On the other hand, Jose envisioned a ray of hope and possibility beyond the hills of sunny California and a lifetime of physical labor. He chose to become involved in his local high school and gained great insight, direction, and support from school staff. He earned the opportunity to accomplish something that no one in his family had accomplished: to earn a college degree. Jose would join the ranks of many Americans as a first-generation college graduate.

College completion has become a rite of passage for many individuals in the United States. Postsecondary institutions have inspired confidence and modeled professionalism to generations of American families for decades. The mental and emotional preparation for collegiate matriculation begins early in most of these communities (Bodnar, 2015). Children attend college sporting events. Athletic stands and fields nationwide are filled with thousands of alums and their children. They receive jerseys that brandish the school’s colors with the names of outstanding players. Indeed, the expectation of attending college is crystallized early during the formative years of some children. Yet, for the children of non-college graduates, the road to a college degree

remains quite different, particularly for Black and Latino male families (Ward et al., 2012a).

In some Black and Latino families, men are expected to contribute financially to meet family needs as soon as they are able. Black and Latino males may be discouraged from giving preference to the pursuit of a college education or vocational training in exchange for immediate gainful employment (Noguera, 2012). Academic indifference develops during the early stages of education for Black and Latino males (Kafele, 2009). During the middle and high school years, patterns of absenteeism and failing grades usually expose family apathy toward male academic achievement (Jackson, 2019). Disinterest among middle and high school male students during these critical years, coupled with academic fatigue, often lead to the lack of academic preparation to pursue education beyond high school for this group.

Consequently, these students lag in critical areas related to college preparation and matriculation (Kafele, 2009). College readiness initiatives and programs are created to reconcile those gaps that may exist. Jesse and Jose experienced several barriers that impeded their goals toward college preparation and attendance. Due to an extension of support, exposure, and mentorship, success was granted. They would soon join the ranks of college graduates and change their lives and families for generations to come.

While immense effort has been exerted to recruit, retain, and serve underrepresented students who are excited and feel at home in their new schools, it is surprising to find out later that a variety of programs are either absent, have lost their purpose, or have not effectively achieved their goals. For instance, dual enrollment programs differ from state to state and vary in standards from one school district to

another within states (Karp et al., 2004). This qualitative study focuses on historical events, laws, and policies that have shaped inequities in education. The larger society will be examined as the backdrop that has perpetuated the lack of college readiness and lower persistence for Black and Latino male students in the state of Missouri (Bolman et al., 2008). As college readiness definitions and measures continue to evolve, one thing is paramount: all students must be better prepared and successfully transition to college (Smerdon et al., 2018). Students should be entitled to learn what interests them so that they can explore their gifts and talents. Therefore, schools must offer a conducive learning environment and support teachers by providing appropriate equipment and supplies for teaching. Educators must also be provided with professional development and a conducive work environment to promote college readiness (NWT Education, CA, 2015).

To more fully understand the magnitude of the problem of a lack of college readiness for Black and Latino male students, we will discuss the background of the problem and examine historical, cultural, social, and local contextual perspectives. Next, the perspectives of the research team will be provided, followed by the specific problem of practice. Research questions that explore the college readiness experiences of Black and Latino male students will follow. The purpose of the study will be presented before examining relevant literature and supportive data. Finally, definitions of key terms will be presented.

Background of the Problem

For many years, Black and Latino males have trailed their White and Asian counterparts in the area of college readiness preparation. One indicator of college

readiness is the successful completion of college entrance exams. College entrance exam data has confirmed the lack of preparedness among Black and Latino students. Royster et al. (2015) confirmed that 49% of White students achieved at least three of the four benchmarks, while only 11% of Black and 23% of Latino students achieved similar benchmarks, as highlighted in the ACT College and Career Readiness report. The ACT provides benchmarks as an indicator of academic preparedness. Additional significant areas of college readiness are associated with the student experience and available opportunities. According to College Bound (n.d.), several components are associated with college readiness. Those areas include plans to expose students early to the college preparation/transition process and encourage participation in an array of enrichment and extracurricular activities. College Bound also expressed that students need to work to determine college affordability and gain insight related to their colleges of interest application process. Without the proper guidance and expertise from school counselors, Black and Latino males often struggle with the process of preparing for college transition. Webb & Brigman (2018) confirmed that Black and Latino students encounter other non-academic obstacles that often impede or interrupt the college readiness process. The present issues in education surrounding Black and Latino males date back many decades. For years, Black and Latino males endured racial discrimination related to access to advanced coursework, unfair disciplinary practices, and overrepresentation in special education in K-12 schools (Jackson, 2019).

As time continued to pass, Black and Latino populations grew discontent with the lack of equal opportunities in education. These unfair practices ignited a fight for change. Specifically, the legal decision of separate but equal appeared to dominate educational

practice, but the court case of *Mendez v. Westminster* began to pave the way for more change. Strum (2015) shared the experience of two farm owners from Westminster, California, who attempted to enroll their students in their neighborhood elementary school but were denied enrollment. The Mendez family was instructed to enroll their students in a school for Mexican students a few blocks away, with poor conditions and fewer resources than the neighborhood school. This injustice ignited a fire in the Mendez parents, and the issue expanded to involve a group of people who had grown weary of similar unfair treatment. This case created a moment of change and hope for access and equality for all. Strum (2015) reported the Supreme Court case victory in September 1946. The courts ruled in favor of the Mendez family, determining that segregated schools were unconstitutional. The Mendez victory was also a major event in American law because it was pivotal in changing segregated education. Despite this major victory, systemic educational injustices continued to exist. The *Mendez v. Westminster* case denounced segregated schools and subsequently segregated housing and recreational facilities as well. Latino students have endured discriminatory struggles from the onset to have the same quality of education and opportunities as their White peers.

Undoubtedly, families desired better experiences and often went to major extremes to access more resources. Families sometimes relocated, to seek equal access to education and financial support. Families also sought better housing (Wilkerson, 2010). Although their expectations were great, they still encountered racial and equal opportunity struggles. Opie (2016) identified that back in the 1960s, institutional racism was present on college campuses. The struggle for equal access for Black and Latino citizens was also a catalyst for another important Supreme Court case, *Brown v. The*

Board of Education. Rhoden (2017) explained that the United States Supreme Court's determination that it was separate but equal was unconstitutional. As a result, the landmark Brown decision ended de jure segregation in education.

To create change during the 1970s and 1980s, many districts implemented an integration system that bussed students from areas of high crime and poverty to suburban school districts rated higher (Mims & Jennings, 1976). The idea was to provide students with the same educational opportunities as their White peers. However, the process was fraught with many different issues. Although this implementation took place, unfortunately, it did not remedy the present educational gap and apparent barriers.

While students continue to prepare to transition from high school to postsecondary institutions, many students, particularly Black and Latino males, endure barriers toward fulfilling their aspirations. Carey (2018) suggested that these barriers include internal and external dilemmas such as fear of leaving their family, college admission, and successful completion of coursework and graduation. The financial challenges are an additional barrier that low-income families of Black and Latino males encounter (Cabrera et al., 2012). Smith et al. (2006) found that families' shared concern in regards to the safety of their Black and Latino male youth could also create barriers. Therefore, families prefer community college attendance rather than a 4-year institution to avoid dangerous situations (i.e., criminality or imprisonment). Finally, Black and Latino males also endure the challenges of a lack of rigorous coursework in high school that will prepare them for academic success in college (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). This is often due to the lack of qualified teachers and mentors available to support them in the school environment. In summary, these challenges create increased difficulties for Black

and Latino male students related to college readiness preparation and persistence.

Students who are not academically prepared to attend college experience increased challenges related to success in college courses and graduation persistence.

College Readiness

College readiness and persistence are crucial components of degree attainment and entry into post-college career opportunities. There is a direct relationship between college readiness and graduation from high school. The college readiness standard measures students' high school achievement and academic preparedness. Arnold et al. (2012) defined the term college readiness as "the multidimensional set of skills, traits, habits, and knowledge that students need to enter college with the capacity to succeed once they are enrolled" (p. 8). Similarly, Conley (2007) described college readiness as a student's ability not only to enroll but also to academically succeed at credit-bearing institutions, specifically in general education courses that do not require remediation. It is critical to understand how primary and secondary educational institutions educate and prepare underrepresented students for academic success in college. Thiem and Dasgupta (2022) asserted that students from historically marginalized populations, including the Black and Latino communities, continue to be underrepresented in higher education. When students are not college-ready, he continued, they may attempt higher education endeavors with limited success, or they may decide not to attend higher education institutions altogether. The pathway to college for Black and Latino male students can be complex, filled with many barriers and obstacles that can impede their potential college access and success.

The American College Testing (ACT) website (2022) clarifies that students who are college-ready possess the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to complete entry-level college coursework to transition into college. ACT data provides evidence of the existing student deficits. According to the ACT, “There are set benchmarks that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75-80% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing courses” (ACT, 2022). If a student receives a certain score, they are projected to perform well in college courses. Therefore, the benchmarks offer a standard for student success. However, a review of ACT data demonstrates that Black and Latino students continue to perform lower than their counterparts. These statistics demonstrate the concrete reality of the national data for student performance regarding a widely used college readiness indicator.

In Missouri, there are greater concerns toward Black and Latino men and the college preparation process. To analyze the impact of these programs on Black and Latino males is very difficult. Le et al. (2016) stated, “...almost 50% of the pre-collegiate interventions were funded by the government, universities funded 17%, and 14% were funded by private philanthropies” (p. 263.) Community and school-based interventions such as College Bound receive the bulk of its funding from private philanthropies. The College Bound program was created to offer underrepresented students an opportunity to experience college life and prepare them to earn a college degree (College Bound, 2023). This program and others provide great opportunities for Black and Latino students because they support the closure of the academic achievement gap.

Studies have also shown that disadvantaged students are often unfamiliar with the college application process. They are less likely than higher-income students to utilize college readiness assessments and preparation opportunities or receive support from a private tutor (Le et al., 2016). Le et al. also recognized that minority, low-income, and first-generation college students often lack the social capital to help them make informed choices related to college readiness, such as how to apply, enroll, and finish.

College Readiness for Black and Latino Male Students

Barriers exist for Black and Latino male students regarding college readiness. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2022) reported that high school graduation rates in public schools were 85%. However, there were marked differences when considering race. For example, White high school students graduated at a rate of 89%, while Latino students graduated at a rate of 80%, and Black high school students reportedly graduated at a rate of 78% (NCES, 2022). The terms “Black” or “African American” are defined as a person who has origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2022). According to the NCES, “Hispanic” or “Latino” is defined as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The terms are also used interchangeably with the abbreviated *Hispanic* (NCES, 2022).

Even for those Black and Latino males who do complete high school and have the opportunity to attend college, challenges still exist. According to Kena et al. (2014), 2013 college graduation data including Latino and Black students aged 25-29 indicated that 16% of Latino and 20% of Black students had completed a bachelor’s degree compared to 40% of White students. According to Hines et al. (2020), African American males’

high school and college graduation rates are lower than their peers. Warnock (2016) observed that Latino and Black students are underrepresented on college campuses as compared to their White and Asian counterparts.

Black or Latino male students, along with those from low-income and first-generation college families, are less likely to enroll in college than other students (Kena et al., 2014). First-generation Latino students whose parents did not attend college are less likely to enroll in college than other students (Morley et al., 2020). Exploring and analyzing these outcomes more in-depth is critical to closing the achievement gap between underrepresented and advantaged students.

Academic performance reports and overall academic outcomes of Black males in K-16 have signaled significant and dreadful disparities in college preparation, enrollment, retention, and completion as compared to their non-Hispanic counterparts (Adams-King, 2016). According to a 2015 ACT/UNCF data report, 61% of African American students who took the American College Test (ACT) in 2015 met none of the benchmarks in the four ACT college readiness areas, which is nearly twice the 31% rate for all students (ACT, 2016). The percentage of adults 25 and older with a bachelor's degree and higher is 28.1% for Black, 20.6% for Latino, and 41.9% for their non-Hispanic White counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau Data, 2022a). These statistics related to Black and Latino male student academic performance suggest that more research is necessary to improve opportunities for Black and Latino males. Additionally, initiatives are needed to challenge traditional education structures and demand policymakers, administrators, researchers, and educators to seek new models and support systems to improve achievement success with this demographic in K-16.

Black and Latino males encounter more obstacles to eliminate the gap in college readiness than their White and Asian counterparts. This achievement gap has been forged by centuries of discrimination and oppression. Both *de jure* laws and *de facto* customs have promoted gaps in educational opportunities for the Black and Latino communities (American University (A.U.), 2020). In addition to the educational opportunity gaps, these practices are fostered through an oppressive social and economic order. Woodson (1933) implied that Negro schools are places where the students are indoctrinated in their inferiority. If one considers the inferior facilities and the disparities in academic offerings in these institutions, one understands the difficulty in closing the achievement gap (Jackson, 2019).

Statistically, there is a gap between Black and Latino males and White men concerning college readiness (Kewal Ramani et al., 2007). Historically, Black and Latino males had to overcome cultural and educational discouragement to pursue college and professional careers. It is important to address the historical, cultural, and racial inequities that have created barriers in education and college readiness for Black and Latino male students (Hernandez, 2023). An examination of the social, cultural, and historical perspectives will further illuminate the deficits in college readiness for Black and Latino men.

Historical, Legislative, Social, and Cultural Perspectives of College Readiness for Black and Latino Males

The historical, legislative, social, and cultural perspectives regarding the college readiness preparation and persistence of Black and Latino males have been shaped by various factors, including racial discrimination, systemic inequalities, cultural values, and

community support. Understanding these perspectives can provide insights into the challenges and strengths that Black and Latino male student populations have endured throughout history. These various perspectives will provide a holistic overview of the Black and Latino male student experience and the academic and non-academic factors that impact and create gaps related to their journey toward college readiness preparation and persistence.

Historical and Legislative Perspective - Black and Latino Male Students

The historical perspective provides a detailed experience that dates back to the Antebellum period (before the Civil War) to the present day. This perspective will detail the challenges and successes of Black and Latino males in education. While not exhaustive, the selected historical perspectives illuminate how the educational systems in the United States have disadvantaged generations of Black and Latino men.

Although new eras brought about change and growth in areas of education, Blacks and Latinos continued to be forbidden to learn and were denied equal access to quality education. Policy changes and partnerships created schools for African Americans and Latinos to progress academically. As previously mentioned, *Mendez v. Westminster* and *Brown v. Board of Education* dismantled some of the inequitable barriers for Black and Latino students. Still, integration and equity in education were not prioritized. Today, Black and Latino males are reaping the benefits of the fight for equal access to education. While access has improved, several barriers remain for these groups.

Historical and Legislative Perspective - Black Students

The early years of formal education in America were exclusively for White males of status and the clergy (Quincy, 2018). Following the Civil War, Americans began to

view education from a new perspective. No longer would formal education be exclusively for wealthy White males. It would be provided as a state function for all citizens in its jurisdiction. Paterson (2021) explains how the mid-1800s ushered in a new perspective of education with three focal points: schools should be supported by taxes, the importance of teacher training, and compulsory education. Although the perspective of education changed, the interest in equitable access for Black students did not. The case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 fomented discrimination in public education and access for the next half century (Hoffer, 2012). Since African Americans wanted to educate their youth and prepare them for future possibilities, they had to assume the responsibility of building schools.

Indeed, African Americans knew that the struggle to provide education for their community would be difficult after 246 years of chattel slavery (Hannah-Jones et al., 2021). Therefore, Black citizens, Black Churches, the American Missionary Association, and the Freedmen's Bureau partnered to establish educational institutions (Brawley, 2018). Eventually, the federal government assisted with the passage of national legislation. According to the National Archives (2021), the second Morrill Act of 1890 required Southern states to set aside land grants for schools that Black students could attend due to segregation policies. These partnerships and policies created grade schools, normal schools or teacher training academies, agriculture and mechanical institutions, and universities. They produced scholars and leaders who helped build and sustain the community in commerce, industry, and education (Rudy, 2020). Today, they are called Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). HBCUs were established to educate and prepare people freed from enslavement and develop a community in the face

of racism and injustices (Lovett, 2015). They have produced scholars, leaders, inventors, scientists, clergy, millionaires, and billionaires. Today, there are 107 public and private HBCUs across the country. They educate and serve approximately 230,000 students. They graduate between 33,000 to 50,000 students each year (Hundred-Seven, n.d.). On September 16, 2022, the Biden Administration honored HBCUs with a proclamation that noted 40% of Black engineers, 50% of Black lawyers, 70% of Black doctors, and 80% of Black judges in America are HBCU graduates (WH. 2021, Sept.3). Without question HBCUs mission remains relevant - to teach and prepare African Americans for professional life (Johnson et al., 2017).

For years, African Americans were also denied opportunities for graduate education in some regions of the country (Street, 2013). In the Midwest, one of the earliest attempts to overcome the obstacle of access to higher education was made by Lloyd Lionel Gaines. In 1936, he applied to the University of Missouri law school. Although Gaines graduated from Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, he was denied admission into law school. Gaines would subsequently file a lawsuit that came to be known as *Gaines v. Canada*. In 1938, the United States Supreme Court ruled in Gaines' favor. Before he could attend, he mysteriously disappeared (Endersby, 2016).

The landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954, which combined five cases of education access suits from all over the country, nullified *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896. However, Southern institutions continued to deny admission to White schools based on race. These discriminatory practices placed African Americans at a disadvantage, particularly in some fields of study that required graduate degrees (Pilgrim et al., 2020). In 1962, in Oxford, Mississippi, James Meredith, a graduate of

Jackson State University and a United States Air Force veteran, enrolled at the University of Mississippi (Meredith, 2016). He wanted President Kennedy to enforce the law of equal access due to the Brown decision. The White citizens of Mississippi rioted for two days (Doyle, 2003). President Kennedy had to deploy 30,000 troops to quell the racial unrest. A year later, in 1963, Vivian Malone and James Hood enrolled at the University of Alabama. They, too, were denied access to the University of Alabama by Governor George Wallace (Clark et al., 2007). Federal marshals were compelled to physically remove Governor Wallace so that the students could enroll in classes at the University of Alabama. Frye Gaillard (2018) stated:

The outcome of the showdown between state and federal authority was never in doubt. The two Black students would be admitted to the University of Alabama. The troubling unknown for Robert Kennedy was what George Wallace was trying to prove and what he was willing to do to prove it. (p.139)

This incident happened a decade following the *Brown* ruling. Yet, there were still private and public entities in the United States that denied African Americans and Latinos their constitutional right to equal access under the law (Freemon, 2015).

Historical and Legislative Perspective - Latino Students

The Latino educational experience shares many similarities to the educational experiences of Blacks. Reynaldo (1994) confirmed:

Most Latino children, like their African American counterparts, were denied access to formal schooling. The few who received instruction attended segregated schools, commonly referred to in the Southwest as Mexican Schools. They were not equal to schools for Whites (p.2).

Throughout history, Latino communities have endured systemic discrimination and racism in the U.S. Access to education, including college, was severely limited for these communities due to legal segregation, discriminatory policies, and inequitable

school funding. However, important legislation aimed to address equity, access, and quality education issues. Legislation and Supreme Court decisions have influenced legal and policy discussions on diversity, affirmative action, and educational access for all students.

The *Mendez v. Westminster* court case ruled that it was unconstitutional and unlawful to segregate Mexican American students because of their ancestry, skin color, or language. “Legally, the census classified Mexican Americans as racially White, based on a designation in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo” (Library of Congress, 2023). However, due to increased immigration and labor needs, all-White school districts were able to deny students the ability to attend their schools due to their Mexican appearance and ancestry. In the 1930s, James Kent, a superintendent in a defending district, stated that “People of Mexican descent were intellectually, culturally, and morally inferior to European Americans” (Library of Congress, 2015). In the 1950s and 1960s, there was an increase in dropout rates of Mexican American students, and those who did graduate averaged the reading level of an 8th-grade Anglo student. Furthermore, based on archival records from the library, school staff not only forbade Mexican American students from speaking Spanish, but they also directed them towards a curriculum designed for students with mental disabilities. Eventually, these students were encouraged to pursue vocational programs rather than postsecondary studies. The educational disparities led to the East Los Angeles walkouts of 1968, during which students expressed their concerns and presented a list of demands to the Los Angeles Board of Education. These demands encompassed changes to the curriculum, the implementation of bilingual education, and

increased representation of Mexican American administrators. Unfortunately, the Board claimed a lack of funding as the reason for being unable to meet their requests.

The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 recognized the need for educational support for students with limited English proficiency. It aimed to help Latino students and other English language learners (ELLs) succeed academically by funding bilingual education programs. The Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*, adjudicated in 1974, also sought to assist ELL students by placing the responsibility on schools to provide meaningful access to education for students with limited English proficiency. This initiative to provide language access increased school accountability and ensured ELL students could overcome language barriers and participate in educational programs. In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in the *Plyler v. Doe* case that states cannot deny access to public education to undocumented immigrant children. This ruling ensures that Latino immigrant children, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to attend public schools. Former President Barack Obama passed Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012, which allowed undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children to receive temporary protection from deportation and work permits. DACA has had a significant impact on Latino students, enabling many Latino students to pursue postsecondary education and career opportunities. Additionally, some states have implemented laws that provide in-state tuition rates to undocumented students who meet certain criteria. These forms of legislation improve college affordability and accessibility for Latino students, regardless of their immigration status.

Laws and court decisions have collectively worked to improve Latino students' educational opportunities and outcomes in the United States. Despite this progress,

challenges persist, including issues related to equity, funding, language barriers, and cultural sensitivity, which remain crucial considerations in the education of Latino students. Attention to these concerns could contribute to eliminating barriers to postsecondary access fostering the expansion of new opportunities for underrepresented students.

Social Perspective - Black and Latino Male Students

Education becomes more essential as America moves into a global and technical age. Some Black and Latino men are unable to fully progress because of their lack of preparation for postsecondary education (Stuesse, 2016). Therefore, schools and educators today play an enormous role in preparing Black and Latino men for college (Jackson, 2019). It is vital that this subject be thoroughly investigated to uncover improvements in processes and support to empower these students.

Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, stated in a speech at the World Bank Conference, “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family” (Annan, 1997). If education is indeed the premise of progress, improvements in education will positively affect society’s development and successes. The positive effect of education on a society improves more than the government and state affairs but also the people of the community. Rodriguez (2020) implied that education provides job opportunities and economic sustainability. With increased opportunities and income, people tend to thrive and provide for their families. Such social progression stabilizes communities and builds generational wealth (Watkins, 2023). Because of education’s generational effect on families and communities, it’s a serious social justice concern.

Social problems require social solutions, which can be applied to cultural problems. There is a consensus regarding the deprivation that Black and Latino communities have endured over centuries. It is futile for one community to think that they can overcome and win or correct all of them. The only practical solution to overcome these problems is collective responsibility and an intersection of hands and minds (Knight-Manuel et al., 2019). Educators and leaders from all backgrounds, including social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, must work together to do this. It is noble work that needs to be undertaken at the local level, using local solutions and resources systematically and equitably (Knight-Manuel et al., 2019). The local perspectives further provide examples of the urgency of this situation for Black males and Latino males in one specific location.

For Black and Latino males, education is quite significant because of the direct relationship between education and incarceration in their communities. Harlow (2003) reported that nationally, 44% of the 490,384 Black prison inmates and 53% of the 179,301 Hispanic inmates had not graduated from high school or received a General Education Diploma (GED) compared to 27% of the 351,742 Whites in state and federal corrections facilities. These statistics are not surprising, considering Lynch (2016) determined that over 50% of Black male students will drop out of urban high schools, and 60% of them will be incarcerated at some point. Lynch adds that 33% of all Black males will see a jail cell in their lifetime. In the Latino male group, more than one out of every two inmates did not finish high school (Harlow, 2003). These disparaging statistics render the ability to easily see the link between education and social justice in this society and the adverse effects that it thrusts upon historically marginalized communities.

Educators have the power to reverse these dismal social realities. They can either expose Black and Latino males to the vast possibilities of a bright future or dissuade them altogether (Jackson et al., 2014). In far too many cases, the latter has been exercised. Obviously, for Black and Latino males, education is more than just an academic matter of pass or failure.

Extensive research has been conducted on the social justice concern in education across America. The study of the phenomenon known as the school-to-prison pipeline has challenged educators to reflect on practices, policies, and perspectives that impact the education of Black and Latino students (Nocella, 2018). Studies have found that aggressive discipline, academic placement, and lack of access and empathy in schools lead to the failure of Black and Latino students (Heitzeg, 2016). For instance, of the 884,557 students in Missouri public schools K-12, Black and Latino students comprise 22% of the population. Yet, Black and Latino students constitute 49% of suspensions and 23% of expulsions. In addition, Black and Latino students only represent 15% of the advanced placement (AP) classes and 12% of the population in gifted programs (ProPublica, 2019).

The ACLU of Missouri also reported that Black male students are four times more likely to receive out-of-school suspension than White males, and Black students with disabilities are three times more likely to be suspended than White males. Clearly, these statistics illustrate that the hyper-criminalization of Black and Latino students begins early in public schools, and social scientists believe that it leads to the eventuality of a disproportionate incarceration rate in the criminal justice system (Nocella, 2018). Certainly, these practices are predicated upon biased racial and social policies that are

formidable impediments to Black and Latino male college readiness preparation, matriculation, and degree completion (Heitzeg, 2016). Youth First (n.d.) and Show-Me Institute (2023, April 24) report the cost to taxpayers for the criminalization of youth to be approximately \$97,000 per year to detain a student in juvenile detention as compared to \$11,249 to teach him in a classroom. Black and Latino male students deserve understanding and empathy as much as they deserve aid and assistance with the formal and informal curricula in schools (Jackson, 2019).

Figure: 1: 2018 Missouri K-12 Disciplinary Reports

Demographics	Population %	Suspensions	Expulsions	Adv. Placement	Gifted
Black	16%	44%	17%	11%	8%
Latino	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%
White	72%	45%	71%	76%	77%

Source: (ProPublica, 2019)

Cultural Perspective - Black and Latino Male Students

Cultural factors influence college readiness and persistence for Black and Latino male students. Cultural values and norms emphasize the importance of education, resilience, and community support, which can positively impact their motivation to pursue and persist in higher education. Apart from obstacles and difficulties, the educational system instills in Black and Latino males a process of adopting a set of beliefs, known as indoctrination, with the aim of assimilation and eventual unawareness of oppression (University of Oxford, 2023). Spring (2016) analyzed a variety of factors that impact minority cultures' educational experience in the U.S. due to globalization, including cultural genocide, deculturization, and denial of education. He determines that Black and Latino males often rely on strong familial and community support networks for effective college readiness and persistence. He explains that family and community

involvement are necessary to provide emotional, financial, and academic support, which encourages students to pursue their academic aspirations.

Retention is an obstacle to degree attainment for both Black and Latino males who enter postsecondary institutions. Some students leave college because they lack the academic preparedness and skills to complete college-level work (Strayhorn, 2010). A major factor related to Black and Latino males' failure to complete their college education is the perception of racial prejudice and discrimination on college campuses and in classrooms (Fleming, 1984). Fleming (1984) explains that these perceptions lead to withdrawal from postsecondary institutions, affect the student's academic achievement and social and academic involvement, and cripple the student's commitment to the institution and their goal to obtain an advanced degree.

Black and Latino males have a unique cultural experience that contributes to a number of barriers that affect their college readiness goals. The problems that Black and Latino males endure are not self-inflicted but systematically imposed on them (Falcon, 2015). Therefore, there is a need to undo the injustices that have been inflicted on Black and Latino communities. For example, employment discrimination, racial profiling, and police brutality should be eradicated and can be accomplished through the promulgation of appropriate policies and programs that work to support college readiness.

According to Ford and Moore (2013), African American males from urban school districts experience negative school outcomes, including academic failure, high dropout rates, low graduation rates, poor test scores, poor grades and grade point averages, limited representation in gifted education and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and higher participation in special education. The authors further explain how negative

stereotypes regarding Black male students may yield expectations of low academic success, which, in turn, leads to less access to advanced courses and gifted education (Ford & Moore, 2013). Similarly, familial factors can impact Black male students' postsecondary readiness and success. Parent support and guidance are important factors in the academic success of all students. Ford and Moore (2013) assert that while the family members of Black male students may be concerned with their academic success, they may possess limited educational, social, and fiscal capital to support their success. Griffin and Birkenstock (2022) contend that not only are Black and Latino students less likely to be provided with adequate college access and readiness information, but their parents are as well. They discuss the idea of parent sharing, which implies that parents from marginalized populations may not have strong social capital networks with other parents in similar situations, so there is a limited flow of information from parent to parent regarding the college process (Griffin & Birkenstock, 2022).

Additionally, some families may adhere to negative stereotypes about these populations of students. For example, the negative stereotype that Black male students are low achievers, which implies that they perform below the average of all students in the building, may be believed by family members (Ford & Moore, 2013). Similarly, Black male students may also be labeled as underachieving, which implies that a student's academic performance is below his cognitive expectancy (Ford & Moore, 2013). These factors continue to lead to additional difficulties for capable Black males to be successful in the school setting and better prepared for college.

Social, cultural, and community factors influence Black students' postsecondary success. Ford and Moore (2013) outlined six familial and cultural factors contributing to

the achievement gap between Black and White male students. For example, parent-pupil ratio, student mobility, summer achievement gains/losses, health factors, and parent participation are vital to Black male students' postsecondary success. Not only are Black students at an educational disadvantage, but Latino students experience similar disadvantages as well as encounter some unique challenges.

According to Harper and Harris (2012), many Black male undergraduate students have educational backgrounds that are marred by low expectations for their success in school and society, a lack of exposure to Black male teachers, and culturally insensitive curricula and teaching strategies when they enter college. Likewise, Harper and Harris (2012) found that they are disproportionately assigned to the lowest academic tracks, wrongly reprimanded, and expelled from school, misdiagnosed for placement in special education programs, and overrepresented among these groups. Black male students often experience the lowest high school graduation rates in many states, even though completing high school is a crucial milestone toward obtaining a college education (Harper & Harris, 2012). In 2008, only 47% of Black male students graduated from high school on time with their entering cohorts, as opposed to 78% of their White male counterparts (Harper & Harris, 2012). It is important to center the experiences of Latino males in U.S. schools. Scholarly work surrounding their unique experiences "has provided important contributions to the importance of different forms of social capital, additive frameworks, mentoring, community cultural wealth, peer-support and friendships" (Carrillo, 2016, p. 6).

The increase in the Hispanic population over the past decade has continued to grow tremendously. U.S. Census (2006) data revealed that Latinos are the nation's largest

racial minority group, surpassing African Americans. Among Latino males 18 to 24, 34.2 percent have less than a high school diploma (Ponjuan & Sáenz, 2011). Latino males experience challenges to postsecondary attainment similar to their Black male counterparts. Those similarities include lower family income and parental education levels (Arbona & Nora, 2007), poor academic preparation (KewalRamani et al., 2007), and lack of access to information regarding the college-going process (McDonough, 1997).

Local Contextual Perspective

The battle for equal rights, access, and college readiness remains an operational movement across the United States. The fight for equality in education has transitioned through a series of reforms to improve the quality of students' education. Historically, society may not have agreed with the changes or the opportunities for growth and equity for all students, but change is crucial. Advancing approximately 70 years since the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, the opportunities and access to education for Black and Latino males have improved, yet there is still much work to do.

Saint Louis, Missouri is known to be one of the most historically segregated cities in all aspects, including education. Gordon (2019) stated that segregation in St. Louis created divided schools within one district, with the infamous "Delmar Divide" separating the north and south sides. The author highlights that White flight and local civic decisions resulted in segregated housing and education, which resulted in the low academic performance of Black students. Geography plays an essential factor in the quality of education, housing, and health; to date, zip codes dictate the quality of education in public schools. There is a considerable gap between the haves and have-

nots. Gordon further stated that historically, the allocation of resources and opportunities depended on the zip code in which a person lived, and it was drastically different across the school districts of Greater St. Louis.

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that educational segregation was unconstitutional and that all state laws establishing separate public schools for Black and White students were invalidated, stating that the laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the laws (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). Yet, Saint Louis city public schools maintained segregated schools even after the landmark United States Supreme Court case (Norwood, 2012).

One example involved Minnie Liddell, a resident of Saint Louis, Missouri, who had children attending St. Louis Public Schools. Liddell, along with a group of African American parents, were concerned about the racial disparities their children experienced while attending public schools (Norwood, 2012). The African American parents formed a committee named the Concerned Parents of North St. Louis. The group met to discuss their concerns regarding intact busing, a process that the St. Louis Board of Education used to reduce school overcrowding, whereby students and teachers were bused to a different school. According to Norwood (2012), parents opposed intact busing for various reasons, including the mistreatment of their children, which included lunch periods during which children were separated by race and designated separate times for Black and White children to drink from water fountains. Norwood (2012) also stated that Black children were not allowed to wait for school buses inside the schoolyard while White children played inside the yard.

In addition, Black and White children were only taught by teachers of the same race. Others allege that Black children had to enter the school building through a separate door. On February 18, 1972, a group of African American parents, led by Liddell, filed a class action lawsuit against the Board of Education for the City of St. Louis in St. Louis Federal District Court, Norwood (2012) added. The Liddell case highlighted systematic racism that was reinforced through the control of education institutions that occurred over 50 years ago. Yet, even more recent incidents and situations reinforce that very little change has occurred regarding the educational experiences of local Black and Latino males.

In the aftermath of the incident in Ferguson, Missouri, wherein, a White police officer fatally shot a Black male named Michael Brown, the subsequent acquittal of the officer ignited significant protests and unrest within the Ferguson community, generating widespread discord on a global scale. Ferguson, known as an area of predominantly Black residents and areas of poverty, became an open display of systematic and structural racism that heavily impacted the Black community. A recent qualitative study (Hudson et al., 2016) indicates that structural racism has hindered the educational and career opportunities for Black men. A focus group that included 26 Black men who were residents in the Saint Louis area revealed that the quality of education and school social environments inadequately prepared them and negatively affected their lives, as these educational disparities were essential factors in the trajectory of their life paths. These men mentioned that they were not adequately prepared for school and wondered what their lives would be if they had remained enrolled at a majority-White school or a school in the county (Hudson et al., 2016).

Critical findings of the ability of Missouri high school graduates to achieve three or more benchmarks indicate that African Americans have consistently scored least, within a 9 to 12 percent range, on the ACT when compared to their White peers who scored 39 to 50 percent and their Asian counterparts who scored 54 to 58 percent (ACT, 2016). In addition, the ACT report related to the condition of college and career readiness for Missouri recommends optimizing opportunities to influence awareness and the engagement of underserved learners, as not all eligible students have taken advantage of the fee waiver initiative (ACT, 2016). In particular, “College readiness for Latino and African American boys is a multifaceted construct that extends beyond academic preparation and involves social, cultural, and personal dimensions” (Martinez, 2014, p. 795). College readiness for Black and Latino male students is different. Within the local context, a different approach is necessary to place Black and Latino male students on a pathway toward college readiness.

Jeffries and Silvernail (2017) affirm the underrepresentation of Black male students in rigorous courses like Advanced Placement or any gifted programs. The authors further indicate that these programs prepare students for college but are perceived to be designed for the White or Asian student population. Black male students require a nurturing atmosphere, the high expectations of school faculty, and a high school pathway that equips them to be prepared for college enrollment and success. Adams et al. (2020) propose an early college framework called the 3-R framework: rigorous instruction, real-world relevance, and supportive relationships. The authors further claim that adopting the 3-R framework in any school setting is beneficial, as the students identified the

framework's benefits, although challenges persisted. In the end, the benefit of the framework outweighs the challenges.

Rias mentions in the context of the racial history of Saint Louis and its impact on school desegregation that “soft racism” might refer to how racial segregation and bigotry have perpetuated through subtler means over time (2018). The author further indicates that Saint Louis has a long history of redlining, which refers to the practice of denying loans or other financial services to people who live in specific neighborhoods based on their race or ethnicity, which has led to significant disparities in wealth and educational opportunities between White and Black residents of the city.

“Despite federal legislation, school desegregation in St. Louis has been uneven and incomplete, with many schools remaining segregated and under-resourced. This has perpetuated longstanding inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes for Black students in the city” (Rias, p. 4). In addition, due to socioeconomic disparities, Blacks in the St. Louis region have encountered low-quality education due to the residential area in which they live. These disparities significantly influence their success concerning college readiness and persistence. In the state of Missouri, Black male students have a high school graduation rate of 66%, the graduation rate of Latino male students is 76%, and the graduation rate of White male students is 85%, which implies that the gap ranges between 9-19% when compared to their White male counterparts (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2015). To improve college readiness for Black and Latino male students, it is imperative to implement systemic changes in K-12 educational systems. These changes should be rooted in social justice and increase academic preparedness to ensure postsecondary success as students transition to college.

Candidate Perspective

The goal of the researchers was to heighten awareness related to the educational struggles of Black and Latino males and enhance educational policies. The researchers explore the college readiness experiences of Black and Latino men with the intention of identifying potential gaps that may be revealed through the data collection process. The creation of a toolkit designated for educators and leaders with a focus on Black and Latino male students was a crucial result. The purpose was to aid in the preparation of students for their journey from local school systems to college. Despite encountering diverse social and political viewpoints, it is imperative that educators persist in their efforts to assist students who are affected by inadequate college readiness preparation guidance. To further clarify, Black and Latino students were forced to embrace the historical traditions of education. According to Jackson & Knight-Manuel (2019), “Traditionally, this structure has had a negative influence on the schooling experiences of students of color, and contemporary practices within schools are inextricably linked to these ‘historical roots’” (p. 65). Students would greatly benefit from the deconstruction of barriers that prevent student progression.

As endeavors to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in postsecondary institutions persist, it is essential to acknowledge that “merely incorporating more diverse faces, providing safer spaces, improving training, and acknowledging historical and contemporary oppressions in the curriculum cannot radically transform the fully racialized social and epistemological architecture upon which the modern university is built” (Kelley, 2018, p.156). Institutions are responsible for recognizing the challenges that students encounter and developing effective solutions to address those challenges. It

is crucial to avoid superficial changes in diversity efforts and engage in comprehensive efforts to dismantle systemic barriers embedded in the foundations of the modern university. If institutional leadership understood the complexities of the existing structure, they could participate in intentional changes that embody and foster an environment of true diversity, equity, and inclusion. In doing so, colleges and universities will contribute to an educational landscape that is responsive to the needs and experiences of a diverse student body.

In addition, college faculty and staff are obligated to assist, and support underserved Black and Latino males in their efforts to complete their enrollment and degree. Furthermore, Jackson and Knight-Manuel (2019) suggested, “In the current social and educational climate of the United States, there remains a need for educators of color to disrupt the potentially harmful social realities their students of color confront and the impact of those realities on schooling experiences” (p.65). Although Knight-Manuel emphasized the importance of educators of color's voice and impact on students, the most impactful change will come when all educators and stakeholders come together to support the success of all students.

It is the responsibility of all educators to be advocates for change. Students do not fully understand the components that constitute a quality education; therefore, they cannot determine the best educational opportunities for themselves. Even if they did understand those opportunities, their influence to affect change is limited because they have been conditioned to comply with the processes and structures that our educational systems have designed. If educators are not involved in the decision-making process or do not have the appropriate representation within these forums, any decision made

without their contribution that affects education is bound to be enforced without scrutiny. The same is true for Black and Latino male students.

Black and Latino male students demonstrate lower academic achievement compared to their White counterparts, as reflected by ACT (2017). This trend perpetuates economic, social, and cultural challenges. The same cycle of injustice will continually replicate throughout generations. The collective moral responsibility of stakeholders is to support those students who are powerless and unaware of the educational support available to them. Educators must also pursue results-oriented changes to ensure that Black and Latino male students receive the appropriate support to consider college attendance. If educational apathy and deficits persist, far too many Black and Latino males will trail further behind in technical and professional career opportunities that may be available (Kafele, 2009). Caring for and supporting these students will significantly improve their chances of college success and enhance their communities (Jackson et al., 2014).

In summary, an understanding of the historical background of the two groups under study, reflection on current practices, and exploration of student experiences can inspire us to take action that can change the trajectory of these two groups forever. In order to accomplish this, a full understanding of the specific problem of practice, which is discussed in the following section, is required.

Specific Problem of Practice

Our problem of practice focuses attention on the historically marginalized Black and Latino male student experience and the systemic barriers that have hindered college access and readiness preparation for these groups. A comprehensive analysis of social,

cultural, legislative, and historical events, as well as multiple factors, contribute to the significant disadvantage that Black and Latino male students encounter concerning college readiness preparation and persistence. It is imperative to explore and better understand the current barriers that these students encounter regarding postsecondary success, including college readiness preparation and persistence. Identifying the best solution-focused practices through the lens of social justice and culturally relevant curriculum will create opportunities for a more successful experience for Black and Latino male students.

Even though this may be a national problem, the researchers intend to focus attention on Black and Latino male students in the state of Missouri. Black and Latino male students in this state are acutely undereducated in various ways that hinder their upward economic and social mobility and career development (Nichols & Schak, 2017). We are considering developing a new program or toolkit that will explore potential areas for improvement. However, we understand that this is a complex matter, and we may need the support of political leaders and other community stakeholders to implement any necessary policy changes.

Research Questions

To understand the underlying factors that are causal factors for the college readiness achievement gap for Black and Latino males, the following research questions will be the guiding focus for this research project:

1. What are the barriers that deter college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?
2. What are the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?

These research questions solicited answers to the college readiness educational problem that plagues Black and Latino male students. The experiences of local educators and college students were documented to provide insight into the two marginalized groups' college readiness experiences. The responses to these two research questions were addressed using a set of interview questions that were extracted from the Opportunity-to-Learn Conceptual Framework (OTL) (Stevens, 1993) and administered to participants in a Zoom meeting setting.

These research questions guided the investigation of the scholar-researchers. The research team interviewed experienced educators and students who have lived experience of preparing for college in Missouri schools. Each group of participants in this investigation received a series of poignant questions to enlighten investigators about preparing Black and Latino males for college. The interviews were arranged over the Zoom media platform.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to analyze critical academic and non-academic facilitators and barriers that contribute to or impede the college readiness preparation, success, and persistence of Black and Latino male students. The study will further examine programs, policies, and support systems that significantly improve current methods to sustain college readiness and success of Black and Latino males. The remainder of this chapter will present related literature and further analysis of the problem and the population of interest.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an era marked by increasing diversity and a call for equitable education, the success of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students has emerged as a critical concern in academia. However, despite concerted efforts to foster greater inclusivity in higher education, historically marginalized Black and Latino male students continue to endure significant challenges in the pursuit of postsecondary success.

As society grapples with persistent disparities in higher education outcomes, an understanding of the multifaceted factors that influence college readiness preparation and persistence among these student populations becomes imperative. These factors consist of socioeconomic background and resource accessibility, cultural and social dynamics, as well as educational preparation and support. Strayhorn (2010) conducted a study highlighting that among Latino males, academic preparedness was identified as the primary determinant of success in college, while for Black males, a different pattern emerged. In the case of Black males, their socioeconomic background emerged as the most significant factor that influenced their college achievements. Notably, this challenges the notion that all minority students should be viewed as a homogeneous group. For Latino males, socioeconomic status (SES) had a lesser impact on their academic performance. In a study conducted by Harper (2012), it was determined that high-achieving Black males were able to establish meaningful connections with professors and administrators through active participation in student organizations and engagement in enriching educational experiences such as study abroad and service-learning programs. However, interviews with college students revealed that very few

could provide in-depth insights related to the relationships that they had established on campus.

Harper (2014) further explained that a significant number of Black male college students felt unprepared for the academic demands of college. Although they considered their high school curriculum challenging enough, they lacked instruction in essential skills like multitasking, effective study techniques, meeting deadlines, and performing well on in-class exams. This underscores the importance of addressing these skills to support the success of Black male students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who tended to achieve lower college grades when compared to their more economically advantaged counterparts of the same race, even when other variables were held constant.

This study aims to delve into the extensive body of research and scholarly works that explore the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that these students encounter during their academic journeys. It will also unravel the barriers that they encounter and identify potential interventions to empower and support their academic aspirations. We aim to synthesize and analyze various studies, theories, and perspectives in order to advance the conversation related to equitable access to higher education. Our goal is to identify the key factors that affect the success of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students and promote more inclusive practices and policies in education.

Student Support Resources

Today, educating a diverse citizenry is essential to the technical progression of society (Frey, 2018). At the core of this issue are the inspirations and supports of two

underserved growing demographics - Black and Latino males. Their preparation for college and beyond is concerning because Black and Latino men are more likely to be incarcerated or have a negative encounter with the justice system when they lack education. In fact, statistics reveal that Black and Latino males are behind in the areas of high school and college matriculation (Lynch, 2016). Lastly, for the Black and Latino communities, there is an obvious direct relationship between education levels and standard of living. Consequently, the researchers seek to discover how stakeholders (i.e. parents, teachers, counselors, community leaders, and mentors) can inspire and support Black and Latino males to pursue a college education (Ward et al., 2012).

Researchers acknowledge the significance of stakeholder collaboration in regard to the preparation of Black and Latino males for college success (Hall, 2006). Education officials are aware that they cannot provide all the resources needed to fully support all students. Tran et al. (2020) discussed the overall need for community collaboration to strengthen school support and how these collective efforts improve students and the community. For Black and Latino males, these public-private partnerships are indeed essential because they expose students to role models, mentors, and professionals who inspire them to matriculate through college (Weiston-Serdan, 2017).

This literature review is a sample of some of the documents that were examined and cited during this investigation. Because the researchers seek to understand the experiences of a diverse group of students and professionals, they found a plethora of research articles, studies, and books from a range of disciplines. The scholar-practitioners also found historical landmark decisions, pedagogical practices and perspectives, and present-day approaches to educating Black and Latino males. This research explores the

college readiness preparation and college matriculation of Black and Latino males. The researchers investigated the academic and non-academic supports that Missouri schools provide for Black and Latino students. In order to understand the support that is offered to students in public schools, researchers were also to investigate the politics and allocations that influence education. Politics in education is most prevalent in communities with large, diverse populations. Schneider et al. (2023) note the intense debates over access to educational resources in urban and suburban districts across the country and how those debates dictate policy changes. Therefore, central to investigating the academic and non-academic support for Black and Latino males is the analysis of the population distribution of Black and Latino communities in Missouri.

The enrollment analysis that the research team explored for Black and Latino students also helped scholar-practitioners gain insights into the relationship between politics and student support. Politics permeate all facets of education (Cooper et al., 2015). Certainly, politics can transform school communities when additional resources and support are provided, and politics can devastate schools as well (Schneider, 2023). Posey-Maddox (2014) mentions the impact on local schools when the community demographics shift and attract more political attention. Also, as the socioeconomics and population of a community change, the local schools tend to follow close behind because of the political distribution of resources. Downey (2020) asserts that access to educational support is predicated upon the political attention attracted by potential voters and taxpayers. However, in the absence of political prowess and economic growth, districts are challenged to adjust to provide funding for student services (i.e., nurses, after-school

tutoring, athletics, mentoring, home-school coordinators, etc.) even in the case of diminished tax bases (Harris, 2020).

The tenth amendment to the United States Constitution empowers states to provide education for citizens (Findlaw, n.d.). Therefore, education is a plenary power of the state. In fact, the state is responsible for providing funding, regulations, and standards to local education agencies (Campbell et al., 2019). The state is also responsible for certifying teachers and professionals who work within the schools. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of Missouri notes that it is responsible for the establishment of assessment standards for Missouri students (DESE, n.d.-a). The states, through the plenary power of the legislature and the department of education, provide citizens with education within their jurisdictions.

Missouri is a large diverse state with two major population centers in St. Louis and Kansas City. The 2020 census revealed that Missouri has 6,186,091 citizens. The 6 million citizens of Missouri identify as many races and ethnicities and live in all types of communities around the state. These communities compete for funding for educational needs, programming, and support. The state spends approximately \$8.5 billion or 24% of the state's budget on education (Budget, 2022, March 2). In this competition, population and representation matters. Missouri has 698,043 Black citizens. Blacks constitute 11.33% of the state's citizenry. The majority of African Americans live in or near the two most populous cities in Missouri - St. Louis and Kansas City. Because housing discrimination policies are practiced throughout the nation, African Americans tend to live in concentrated communities (Schwartz, 2021). Although the Black and Latino communities share a number of social commonalities, there are a few population

distribution distinctions worth noting. These population distinctions dictate the degree of services and support that Black and Latino male students receive in education.

Both St. Louis and Kansas City have local school districts that serve thousands of students. In St. Louis, the St. Louis Public School District (SLPS) has 74 schools and serves 19,299 students; 77.8% are African American and 5.8% are Hispanic. The operating budget of SLPS is \$394,304,000. Over 3/4 of their funding derives from local allocations (U.S. News, n.d.-a). Because of the combination of local, federal, and state funding, SLPS spends \$156.7 million or 40% of its budget on special support services. Those services include special afterschool programs such as enrichment activities, safe spaces, and remediation sessions. Some of these programs include mentoring groups for Black males. These mentoring groups are very successful, as they provide tremendous support and inspiration for the young men they serve. These types of programs are not available in every local education agency. They exist in SLPS because of the funding sources and communal focus which are based on the enrollment, socioeconomic status, and social needs of students.

Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) serves a greater community of Hispanic students. Out of the 14,113 students in KCPS, 27.4% are Hispanic. KCPS has more student support programs for its Hispanics students relative to SLPS because of the nearly 4,000 Hispanic students that they serve. The two school district students are predominantly African American, and more than 70% of their students are economically disadvantaged. The total budget for KCPS is 247,298,000. The district also prioritizes student support services. The school system spends 44% on support service programs (U.S. News, n.d.-a). The KCPS student population is more racially diverse than SLPS,

which necessitates more programming for different groups of students. Because they serve a considerable community of Latinos, KCPS has services and programming tailored to serve their distinctive needs.

Figure 2: Enrollment and Student Support Service Spending by Race and School District:

School Districts	Black Students	Hispanic Students	Support Services Budget
SLPS	15,053 78%	1,158 5.8%	\$156.7 million 40%
KCPS	7,621 54%	3,867 27%	\$109.3 million 40%

Sources:

(Louis, n.d.); (Black Population n.d.); (Bureau, 2022, July 22); (MO Population, 2023)

The aforementioned enrollment and budgetary priorities for SLPS and KCPS are demonstrative of the relationship between representation and resources. This simply illustrates how easy it is for underserved students to remain underserved, particularly when their population is miniscule. All students should receive the tools and supports that they need for success, despite their student representation in the school. It is incumbent upon teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators to advocate for the support of each child in their care (Wine, 2018). It is the objective of the researchers to share with educators those academic and non-academic supports that prepare Black and Latino male students for college readiness, matriculation, and degree completion.

Recent evidence indicates a growth in the enrollment of Hispanic youth in K-12 education. However, most students are at risk for academic failure due to academic and non-academic facets. Hollander (2017) states that statistics and anecdotes reveal that most students are unprepared for college attendance. Supporters of the Common Core curriculum assert that the introduction of college-level course content to high school students would provide them with an advantage, which could result in increased college

readiness. Advocates of educational reform and retention and college administrators seek to identify strategies to implement practices and programs that promote college retention. Murphy and Murphy (2018) explain that high school preparation is one of the factors for getting ready, getting in, and getting through. Many Latino students complete remedial courses in the summer bridge program prior to college attendance. Academic factors that hinder degree completion for the Latino students include high school preparation, first-generation college student status, and lack of college affordability. High school counselors are essential because they can encourage students to achieve high GPAs and provide admission and financial aid application guidance at the onset of their high school journey.

The aforementioned factors have a direct impact on both college readiness as well as access. Additionally, there is a correlation between these factors and college access. Page and Scott-Clayton (2016) researched college access. They suggested that institutions across all educational sectors must focus on resolutions that seek to eradicate multiple barriers at any given time rather than to focus on one issue or barrier at a time. The suggested concept could potentially enhance college readiness and college access alike.

This qualitative research study presented historical events, laws, and policies that have shaped inequities in education and our society as the backdrop which has perpetuated lower college readiness preparation success for Black and Latino Males.

Social Justice

The achievement gap of Black and Latino males is a critical topic that merits careful consideration, as there are various factors to consider ensuring a comprehensive

understanding of the issue. From elementary school to graduate school and professional levels of education, there are differences in academic attainment in the United States based on criteria like race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and ability status (Moreu and Brauer, 2021). According to Moreu and Brauer (2021), an essential gauge of educational equity involves determining the existence or lack of achievement gaps, which are essentially disparities in educational performance and outcomes among individuals who belong to marginalized and non-marginalized groups. Sutton and Gallaway (2000) stated that achievement discrepancies are driven by a variety of causes, like any complicated socioeconomic issue. Access to high-quality education in the earliest years of one's educational journey is a key indicator of academic achievement at the most important educational level. Regardless of their own socioeconomic condition, Goldsmith (2011) asserts that students from marginalized backgrounds often attend schools with fewer resources. According to Flores (2007), these schools are frequently racially and economically segregated, which results in a lack of highly qualified teachers, scarce resources, and inadequate support systems for students aspiring to pursue higher education.

According to Hardway & Fuligni (2006), compared to their peers, students from marginalized backgrounds frequently have more family responsibilities. For instance, students could be responsible for the care of younger siblings or elderly relatives while their parents work, or they might have to provide translation assistance if their parents are not proficient in English, according to Witkow et al. (2015). Students may lack significant support from their immediate social environment to pursue a college

education. Efforts to close achievement gaps are not only a moral imperative, but also beneficial to society, including non-marginalized groups.

According to Colgren and Sappington, (2015), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a standardized assessment of student achievement mandated by Congress and conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics since 1969, revealed significant disparities in academic performance between Black and Latino students when compared to their White peers. According to data from NAEP (2015), in terms of academic achievement, disparities in learning behaviors, knowledge, and skills are detected among children who belong to different racial and ethnic categories from infancy through preschool and the kindergarten stages. Furthermore, the NAEP data demonstrated variations in performance for students who advanced to the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels. Since the 12th grade represents a significant milestone in which students graduate from high school and enroll in college or engage with the job market, performance in reading and mathematics during this period can influence one's achievements upon high school completion. In 2013, according to NAEP, 12th-grade female students achieved higher reading scores than their male counterparts (292 compared to 282 respectively). This pattern held true for most racial/ethnic groups although there was no significant difference observed for students who were classified as multiracial. Among the male 12th grade group, Asians (291), Whites (290), and those of two or more races (288) obtained higher average scores than Hispanics (272), American Indians/Alaska Natives (266), and Blacks (262). The disparities in academic performance affect many aspects of the lives of students who fail to graduate from high school. High school graduation rates include more than just the number of students who do not

complete their education each year. They also serve as an indicator that non-high school graduates are at risk of being incapable of earning a living wage or remaining trapped in poverty. Cardichon and Darling-Hammond (2017) assert that graduating from high school has numerous positive implications, including improved economic and health outcomes, increased engagement in democratic processes and community activities, and reduced likelihood of involvement in criminal activities or reliance on social services. Cardichon and Darling-Hammond have also estimated that a 10% increase in high school graduation rates would result in a 9% decline in criminal arrest rates. Therefore, addressing the achievement gap can foster equity for personal and academic growth and break the cycles of poverty in Black and Latino communities.

A reduction in the achievement gap helps to create a more just and equitable society. Marginalized students would have access to opportunities and a quality education regardless of their race or ethnicity. A more equitable educational system produces a workforce that is more diversified and talented, which can help marginalized communities break the cycle of poverty, improve their economic situation, and reduce their dependence on social assistance programs.

Addressing educational disparities and providing equal opportunities can also help create safer communities. Education plays a vital role in building strong communities. When Black and Latino communities have access to quality education and achieve academic success, they will be better positioned to contribute positively to their communities and drive collective progress. Addressing the achievement gap for Black and Latino male students is educational justice but it also provides the gateway to a more

inclusive society in which individual well-being, economic prosperity, and comprehensive opportunities for academic success are considered.

College Readiness

College readiness is defined as the ability of students to not only enroll in college courses but to experience academic success at institutions that offer credit-bearing courses, specifically in general education, and do not require remediation (Conley, 2007). The failure or inability to choose a college, navigate the college application process successfully, apply for admission and the inability to do entry-level college coursework competently and failing to proceed to higher-level courses demonstrate that a student lacks college readiness preparation (Conley, 2007).

Black and Latino male students continue to encounter barriers related to college readiness preparation and persistence. Previous literature and research have outlined a variety of factors that can deter college readiness for underrepresented students. For example, students who are racial or ethnic minorities and have low-income backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities and first-generation college students, are often underrepresented in higher education (Hines et al., 2020). The authors continue to assert that certain groups, particularly underrepresented students, often encounter challenges in the quest to achieve a college degree (Hines et al., 2020). When these challenges are not mitigated, the achievement gap in relation to underrepresented students continues to grow.

Black and Latino male students continue to struggle with college readiness preparation as compared to their White counterparts. Babeineau (2018) discussed college persistence for underrepresented student populations and substantiated the claims with

the use of data that was provided by the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) which relied upon longitudinal data for college-going and persistence among first-generation college students. The authors continued to share that academic and cognitive inequalities between first-generation students and their peers are inextricably linked to high school performance data. Proportionally, fewer first-generation college students had completed Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate (IB) credits (18% vs. 44%) or high-level math courses (27% vs. 43%) and calculus (7% vs. 22%).

The cost to obtain a college degree is expensive. Warnock (2016) asserted that cost is an obstacle related to postsecondary transition planning for underrepresented students. The authors continue that parental perceptions of their ability to pay for their child's college education could be a contributing factor for the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences in college enrollment rates. In turn, these differences may explain why Black, Latino, first-generation, and low-income students are underrepresented in postsecondary institutions. There is a correlation between parental income, education, and perception regarding the ability to pay for college (Warnock, 2016). The authors continue that these parents are more likely to believe that there is no realistic way to pay college expenses and to respond that they have not had equitable access to resources regarding financial information. This is just one barrier that Black and Latino male students encounter regarding college readiness planning and preparation.

College choice is another barrier that underrepresented students encounter. According to Roderick et al. (2011), educational research consistently reveals that underrepresented students that possess equitable college readiness qualifications are less likely to attend certain colleges when compared to their more advantaged peers. The

authors continue to assert that these students tend to apply to colleges for which they may be overqualified as compared to their more advantaged peers. A study conducted by Hoxby and Turner (2013) examined the effect of receiving relevant admissions and financial aid documents during a student's senior year on their admission to colleges that matched their academic qualifications. Results indicated that 54% of low-income, high-achieving students were admitted to a college of their choice upon receipt of the mailed resources as compared to 30% of similar students in comparable scenarios (Hoxby & Turner, 2013). It is evident that the phenomenon of identifying a college of choice plays a role in how, and if, underrepresented students attend higher education institutions.

First-generation students encounter unique challenges related to college readiness. For example, one critical suggestion is that of bridging the "social capital gap" for first-generation college students. Social capital is defined as the system of relationships to which a person has access within their environment (Dyce et al., 2013). These authors continue to argue that first-generation college students and their families often have limited knowledge regarding the logistical aspects of the college application process. Roderick et al. (2011) asserts that these families rely heavily on educational institutions to provide guidance throughout the college application and admission process. However, when underrepresented students attend under-resourced urban schools, the information is not always readily available and clearly conveyed.

Educational access, achievement, and attainment of tertiary education are disproportionate for underrepresented students when compared to that of their White and Asian counterparts. Swail et al. (2003) reported that "enrollment and persistence rates of low-income students; Black, Latino, and Native American students; and students with

disabilities continue to lag behind White and Asian students, with Latino students trailing all other ethnic groups” (p. 19). Schreiner et al. (2011) added that “students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups tend to face a number of unique challenges when they enter college” (p.43). Inadequate access to academic and college readiness preparation during the secondary education experience places underrepresented students in an inefficacious position before they even enroll in a postsecondary institution. Kinzie et al. (2008) explained that “large numbers of students do not complete the academically challenging coursework in high school necessary to do well in college, which contributes to low retention and graduation rates” (p. 21).

Underrepresented students attend local K-12 public schools with an expectation that they will obtain a quality education and graduate from high school with the appropriate academic preparation to be successful in postsecondary education or have developed the necessary skills to enter the workforce. Thiem and Dagupta (2022) report that funding derived from local property taxes is the primary funding source for local K-12 public schools. Students who reside in less affluent areas often attend public schools that receive apportionments from a lower tax base, thereby receiving an education that is regarded as subpar to students who reside in areas in which the tax base is higher (Thiem and Dagupta, 2022). Thiem and Dagupta (2022) confirmed that:

Communities in economic distress are less profitable and therefore have a lower tax base. This means less funding flows to local K-12 schools, resulting in fewer trained teachers, larger classes, fewer advanced placement courses, fewer enrichment programs, and crumbling classrooms and facilities. (p. 213)

According to Thiem and Dagupta (2022) socioeconomic status poses another barrier to college access for underrepresented students when they consider options for

postsecondary education. The costs of attending college can overshadow the desire to continue their education. Underrepresented students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may possess insufficient knowledge of college financials and resources (Thiem and Dagupta, 2022). It is commonplace for first-generation college students to work full-time to avoid student loans while maintaining a sizable course load and financially supporting their families (Falcon, 2015).

According to Pike et al. (2008), critical to student success in college is time to attend classes, complete assignments, and become a member of the college community. Students who work full-time to support themselves, and sometimes their families, may impede their ability to focus on the demands of attending college. Underrepresented students who work full-time while attending college may find that employment is a necessary means to an end. Pike et al. (2008) reported that “national data indicates that 68% of all college students work for pay during the academic year and one-third of these students work more than 20 hours per week” (p. 4). They stressed that “conventional wisdom holds that working while attending college dilutes student effort and results in lower grades” (p. 4). Additionally, they stated, “At most colleges and universities, grades are a factor in whether students will persist and graduate, influence entry into high-level occupations, and determine admission to graduate or professional school” (p. 4).

The challenges that college students who work full-time must consider while pursuing their education cannot be overlooked. Time and dedication are crucial for success in college, as students must attend classes, complete assignments, and actively engage in the college community. However, for underrepresented students, employment

may lead students to juggle the demands of work and education. The findings of Pike et al. (2008) highlight the prevalence of working students and the concerns regarding the potential impact on student academic performance.

Parents and families of underrepresented students often lack an understanding of the college experience and have difficulty supporting student achievement, retention, and attainment of a baccalaureate degree. While examining the role of support services in relation to the transitional experiences of underrepresented students who use a statewide access program, Berumen et al. (2015) observed that “students whose parents attended college and students from middle- to upper-class socioeconomic backgrounds have a distinct advantage over other students” (p. 29). Unlike students from middle and upper-class socioeconomic backgrounds, underrepresented students are at a disadvantage when accessing resources, college application processes, and preparation for transitioning from high school to college. According to Mishra (2020), the difference in academic performance between students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds can be partially linked to variations in family resources, including financial aspects, academic support, information access, parental engagement, and language abilities.

Historically marginalized students also endure the challenges of institutional barriers. According to Brock (2010), among students who were eligible to attend college but chose not to attend, the high expenses of college, the accessibility of financial assistance, and the unclear process of enrolling in college courses continue to serve as major obstacles. Additionally, Brock states that insufficient college readiness plays a role although the proliferation of inclusive institutions has diminished its role as a barrier to entry and instead made it more relevant to achieving success after enrollment. These

barriers demonstrate a noticeable difference in graduation rates among underrepresented students and White students. In a study of national data regarding graduation rates by race, Banks and Dohy (2020) reported the “clear disparities between students of color and their counterparts” (p.118). Banks and Dohy also found that six-year completion rates for four-year institutions reveal that Black students were the least likely to graduate (45.9%), followed by Latino students (55%). The graduation rate for White students was 67.2%, and Asian students had the highest graduation rate of 71.7% (Shapiro et al., 2017). These disparities are not isolated to first-year college students, as completion rates for students who transfer from community colleges also revealed differences by race (Bank and Dohy, 2020). According to Shapiro et al. (2017) one in four Asian and one in five White transfer students graduated, while only one in ten and one in thirteen of Latino and Black transfer students graduated, respectively.

According to Kena et al. (2014), students of Hispanic or Black descent from low-income and first-generation college families are less likely to enroll in college than other students. Similarly, Morley et al. (2020) concluded that students whose parents did not attend college are less likely to enroll in college as compared to other students. Tello and Lonn (2017) argued that universities across the United States continue to have difficulty with the retention and success of first-generation college students, which includes significant numbers of Latino students. Cataladi et al. (2018) reported that first-generation students’ college completion rate is lower than the completion rate for students who are not considered first generation. In summary, first-generation college students may encounter college readiness and access barriers.

It is pivotal that students are academically prepared for college. When equitable college readiness programs are not provided, students encounter obstacles that can hinder their postsecondary pursuits. It is vital that K-12 educational institutions provide strong college readiness programs to ensure a successful college transition for this population of students.

College Readiness Barriers for Black Males

According to Wood et al. (2017), implicit bias plays a substantial role in the issue of racial disproportionality in school discipline and argues that Black students often encounter more harsh disciplinary consequences than their non-Black peers for similar infractions. Houston et al. (2020) contends that Black male students encounter institutional and instructional barriers in high schools. The lack of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, lower enrollment rates, and honors courses implies that intelligence contributes to the underrepresentation of Black male students in such programs. College and career opportunity gaps are also a barrier, as access to college and career counselors is low. There needs to be more knowledge concerning Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) opportunities, as counselors lack personal investment in students (Houston et al., 2020). Finally, Black male students often find school to be a safe haven when they encounter challenges at home or with teachers, such as unsupportive environments and discrimination (Houston et al., 2020).

Harris (2018) explained the educational experience of Black male success in college: the unique barriers were that Black male students internalize masculine norms, conceal fear and anxiety, and hide their academic vulnerabilities, resulting in masculinity that has a significant negative impact on academic success. Harper and Nichols (2018)

confer that many Black male student-athletes internalize masculine norms that prioritize physical toughness and athletic performance over academic success and may be reluctant to seek help or support for academic issues, which leads to lower academic achievement and graduation rates.

When examining college retention for Black male students, Egan (2019) concluded that the probability of degree attainment is higher when a student blends into the campus culture. Johnson et al. (2016) noted that Black male students in particular may struggle to integrate into campus communities due to various factors, including structural racism and the absence of supportive networks. Harper and Newman (2012) asserted that the racial climate at predominantly White institutions, including limited faculty representation and negative stereotypes regarding Black male students, creates significant barriers to the integration and success of Black male students.

To summarize, this analysis highlights the many obstacles that Black male students confront within the educational system. Biases that are not openly acknowledged contribute to differences in discipline, leading to more harsh punishments for Black students. Houston et al. (2020) have identified institutional and instructional barriers, including limited access to advanced courses, lower enrollment rates, and the belief that honors courses equate to intelligence, further marginalizing Black male students. College readiness opportunity gaps, inadequate access to counseling resources, insufficient information about STEM opportunities, and a lack of personal investment from counselors compound these barriers. Even more exacerbating are the challenges of unsupportive home environments and insensitive teachers.

To address the educational disparities of Black male students, it is necessary the researchers used a comprehensive approach. This requires changes in educational policies as well as cultural shifts in our expectations and perceptions of Black male students. Creating inclusive classrooms, providing targeted support, fostering open discussions about masculinity, and dismantling systemic biases can help level the playing field and set Black male students on a more equitable path toward educational success.

College Readiness Barriers for Latino Males

Within the context of higher education, it is imperative to gain comprehensive insights into the impediments that hinder the process of college readiness preparation for Latino male students. This segment explores the intricate challenges that act as barriers to the college readiness preparation of this specific student demographic. An in-depth analysis of the unique challenges encountered by this cohort serves to provide nuanced comprehension of the underlying issues that could potentially lead to targeted interventions and the augmentation of educational attainment.

One of the most cited barriers that Latino male students encounter regarding college readiness preparation and access is the phenomenon of being a first-generation college student. Latino et al. (2021) stated that nearly fifty percent of first-generation college students identify as Hispanic or Latino. According to Kena et al. (2014), students from Hispanic or African American descent who are also classified as low-income and first-generation college families are less likely to enroll in college than other students. Similarly, Morley et al. (2020) concluded that students whose parents did not attend college are less likely to enroll in college as compared to other students. Tello and Lonn (2017) argued that universities across the United States continue to have difficulty with

the retention and success of first-generation college students. Moreover, Cataladi et al. (2018) reported that first-generation college student completion rates are lower than the completion rate for students who are not considered first generation. Collectively, this research substantiates the claim that being a first-generation college student, as many Latino males are, creates a barrier in their pursuit of a postsecondary degree.

Another barrier that Latino male students experience is related to their socioeconomic status. Morley et al. (2020) reported that in 2015, nearly 5.27 million Latino children were living in poverty, which was more than any other ethnic or racial group in the country. As Latino children approach high school graduation and contemplate attending college, economics becomes a large factor to consider. According to Excelencia (2019), the average family income for Latinos was the second lowest of all racial and ethnic groups. Latino students received the lowest amount of financial aid as compared to all racial and ethnic groups, Excelencia further explains. Warnock (2016) argued that parental perceptions of their ability to pay for their child's college education could be a contributing cause to the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences in college enrollment rates. For example, parents may perceive that financing their child's college tuition is unrealistic, in turn, deterring the student from pursuit of a postsecondary degree. There was also a correlation between parental income and education and their perception regarding the ability to pay for college (Warnock, 2016). The authors continued that this group of parents were more likely to respond in a survey that they have not had equitable access to resources regarding access, the application process, and pertinent financial information. It is evident that socioeconomic status plays a role in college access for Latino male students.

Insufficient social capital is an additional challenge that hinders the college readiness preparation and persistence of Latino male students. Dyce et al. (2013) stated that “social capital considers the relationships that individuals form with others in their communities and how those relationships can facilitate action” (p. 157). Mishra (2020) discussed the importance of how potential college students often learn the procedures of the college application process, including cost, financial aid, and an acceptable college choice from their family members, friends, and teachers. Additionally, Mishra indicated that students from marginalized populations, including low-income and first-generation students, may have less college-related social capital as compared to other groups. When there is a lack of knowledge within the social circles of students regarding the college navigation process, there, in turn, can be a lack of guidance that is communicated to these students. Roderick et al. (2011) also substantiated that first-generation college students and their families often have limited knowledge regarding the logistical aspects of the college application process. The authors continued that these families rely heavily on school and community institutions, such as churches and cultural institutions, to provide guidance and information throughout the college application and admission process. Additionally, they stated that when historically marginalized students attend under-resourced urban schools, the information is not always readily available and clearly conveyed by staff. The importance of college-related social capital to Latino male students cannot be understated. This insufficient social capital is yet another barrier that this group of students face regarding college access and readiness preparation.

It is critical to explore and understand the college readiness and access barriers that Latino male students continue to encounter to improve postsecondary outcomes for

this historically marginalized and underrepresented population. The common barriers include first-generation student status, socioeconomic factors, and insufficient social capital. These are just a few of the many obstacles that Latino male students encounter regarding college access and readiness preparation.

To address these significant disparities in college readiness, it is important to address the factors that hinder the postsecondary matriculation of Latino students (Hall, 2006). Policymakers and educators should work towards fostering greater equity and opportunity for all students, regardless of their racial or ethnic background (Museus et al., 2007).

According to Paik (2015), "The data suggest that Latino students' college choices are influenced by a variety of factors, including their academic preparation, financial considerations, and social and cultural factors such as family expectations and peer influence" (p. 23). This data informs educators to consider not only academic abilities and financial considerations, but also Latino students' social and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, Latino students experience a lack of familiarity with college culture, college affordability, and access to financial aid. For instance, both families and students must have a comprehensive understanding of loans and grants. This includes the families and students having a conversation with guidance counseling or financial aid staff regarding the potential loan debt that they will incur once aid and scholarships are applied.

Latino families may need additional support during the college admission process to best understand and arrive at an informed decision. Due to lack of guidance, Latino students may apply to a university later than their White counterparts. If they are

applying later during their senior year, that also pushes the timeline when they commit to enroll and submit housing deposits. These factors will not only impact a student academically but will also influence a student's journey towards being college bound and consequently, their college choice. Olson (2019) determined that college recruiters often struggle to have meaningful conversations with students regarding the college application process due to factors such as language barriers, cultural differences, and students' lack of prior knowledge related to the process. To best support Latino students, college admission professionals must ensure that they are equipped to work with diverse students of all backgrounds, but they must specifically understand the important role Latino students' lived experiences and identity play in their journey towards college. Many higher education institutions have set enrollment goals to increase Latino enrollment.

Grawe (2020) claims:

colleges and universities will need to make an extra effort to attract, retain, and graduate Latino students. This will require greater investments in financial aid, academic support, and cultural programming, as well as a commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment. (p. 58)

Academic Readiness - Black and Latino Males

High school college readiness courses like honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit, and gifted courses challenge and prepare students for a successful college experience. International Baccalaureate programs, specifically, use the habits of mind like openness, metacognition, flexibility, curiosity, and engagement, as these are essential for college success (Khost et al., 2017). These learning experiences helped students reflect, manage and prioritize tasks. It is necessary

for urban districts with a large number of students of color to offer rigorous high school pathways aligned to college standards. In a study conducted by Royster et al. (2015), they state that “students who take college preparatory coursework may also be more likely to possess higher-level academic and non-cognitive skills than their peers in less challenging coursework” (p. 220). Royster et al. emphasize the importance of ensuring that students participate in college preparatory courses in high school.

According to Williams et al. (2019), students from inner-city backgrounds may lack the critical academic and social skills that are necessary for success in college, and a lack of resources and support can compound this. Williams et al. also discuss the importance of providing targeted interventions to support these students to overcome these challenges and succeed in college. Klasik and Strayhorn (2018) concluded that with the implementation of ambitious readiness standards by states, there is a renewed emphasis on assessing the proportion of college students who need developmental courses, indicating that many students may have to be enrolled in remedial classes before they can begin college-level coursework.

Historic racial disparity in education and public disinvestment in Black and Latino communities have consistently increased the gaps in education, income, and employment (Marquez, 2019). The creation of career pathways can help close achievement gaps and advance racial equity. Marquez found that “linked learning and career pathways are a great way to build cultural capital for students as it is teaching them specific skills to mobilize them forward” (p. 46). These pathways can curtail the perception that Black male students are limited to athletics or music careers and increase college readiness and persistence. Núñez and Cuccaro-Alamin (2013) examined the

college choice process for first-generation Black and Latino college students and argue that college readiness is linked with career pathways; they suggest that educators and policymakers must take a more comprehensive approach to college readiness, including addressing factors such as career development and social support.

Voight et al. (2015) explored the differential dropout rates of Black and Latino students in the United States; they argue that the high school dropout rate is linked to lower academic achievement, confidence, and disengagement from school. They further suggest that schools and policymakers must take a more holistic approach to understand and address these issues, including addressing the social and economic factors that contribute to educational disparities.

According to Jackson and Knight-Manuel (2019), teachers of color and those from African American communities are challenged to share socially and culturally sensitive curriculum. There is a failure of understanding on the part of the teachers, counselors and school administrators to realize that the inclusion of socially and culturally sensitive curricula creates a teacher-student bond, thus enabling easy transfer of knowledge. Such a critical intellectual exchange creates rapport and breaks barriers of communications, thereby enabling the teacher to teach effectively with compassion and meaning. Undoubtedly, cultural relevance and knowledge are quite significant today to inspire Black and Latino men.

K-12 districts prepare students to be college and career ready. The percentage of Black students who are able to meet 3 or 4 College Readiness Benchmarks by Core College Curriculum Status is 22%, while 57% of White and 67% of Asian students met the college readiness benchmarks, as reported by ACT (2017). As previously mentioned,

there is a disparity in academic achievement among the Black male student population in K-12 education. Convertino and Graboski-Bauer (2018) suggest that secondary education systems need to develop college readiness initiatives that target low-income and minority students. They further state that this is due to low-income and marginalized student populations who experience more inequitable disparities regarding college readiness preparation. Furthermore, the classroom atmosphere for Black males is usually characterized by unqualified teachers who lack pedagogical training related to culturally responsive teaching (Hines et al., 2022). According to the report of the College Board report (College Board, 2014), Black students represented 14.5% of high school graduates in 2013, while Latino students accounted for 18.8% in the United States.

According to the Bureau of the Census (2020), the Latino population comprises 18.9 percent of the total population in the United States. In 2019, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that the number of Latino/a and Hispanic students who attend college increased from 3.17 million in 2016 to 3.27 million in 2017, and 36% of Hispanic 18-24 year-old were enrolled in college. This indicates an increase in the number of Latino students who attend college, and this trend is expected to continue to grow. Despite the increase:

Latinos have faced numerous obstacles in achieving educational parity with other groups, including inadequate funding for schools with high Latino populations, high rates of poverty and limited English proficiency, and a lack of access to advanced courses and specialized programs (Mora, 2014, p. 5).

Mora (2014) elaborates that the disadvantages Latino students encounter originate very early during their K-12 journey. Baca and Mendez Newman (2007) reported that about 60% of Latino community college students require at least one year of developmental or remedial coursework in English, reading, or mathematics before progressing into the

general curriculum. Students face a lack of support from staff often due to linguistic limitations and therefore support from school staff. The shortcoming of meeting diverse needs should be attributed to institutions; however, students are commonly labeled as underachieving instead. As Villenas and Deyhle (1999) affirm, racism and White privilege lead to colorblind policies that explain Latino school underachievement in which low teacher expectations, low-level classes, and curriculum exists. This promotes an understanding of the impact of the permanence of race-related issues on societal and educational systems. Being able to effectively work with diverse students is essential for successfully introducing a culturally sensitive curriculum in the classroom since it is important to recognize "social and cultural factors such as poverty, language barriers, lack of social support, and limited access to academic preparation and resources can inhibit academic success" (Gildersleeve, 2018, p. 6).

The average composite ACT score for Missouri Latino students was 19.1 compared to their White peers who had a composite score of 21.2, and their Asian counterparts who received a score of 23.5 (ACT, 2017). The percentage of students who scored 3 or 4 college readiness benchmarks is 32% compared to White students who scored 57% and Asian students who scored 71% (ACT, 2020). Castellanos et al. (2018) mention that the declined participation of Latino college students is due to school dropout, overrepresentation in prison systems, military enlistment, and early entry into the workforce.

Current Interventions and Solutions

In addition to understanding the barriers that Black and Latino males encounter, it is important to examine the supports which are currently in place for college readiness

preparation and persistence for historically marginalized students. The college readiness preparation experiences of historically marginalized students, particularly Black and Latino males, have been a topic of concern and research in recent years. As a result, scholars and practitioners have identified various intervention strategies and programs to prepare these students for successful college experiences. Intervention strategies and solutions proposed by researchers and practitioners to address college readiness gaps among Black and Latino male students are presented. These interventions and solutions provide potential frameworks which support additional exploration of the landscape of Black and Latino male college readiness preparation. Hines et al. (2020) created a group counseling program for Black male students that increased college readiness preparation. Small groups of eight Black male students had five sessions which were 50 minutes in duration in which participants could discuss with their peers as well as guest speakers their interests, courses, college information, and experiences as Black males. Hines et al. (2020) reported that this program helped increase opportunities for Black male student enrollment in a college or university of their choice.

Harris (2018) suggested implementing masculine support and transition programs for high school to college students and on-campus support programs. These initiatives involve training senior undergraduate and graduate male students to become group co-leaders, which helps to develop peer mentors. Aside from stereotyping, campus integration makes it challenging for Black male students to complete their degrees. Racial hostility toward and isolation of Black male students deter a sense of belonging and inhibit campus integration opportunities (Egan, 2019). Egan suggests a Black male

initiative program to aim for equity in education, including a hiring search toolkit, a bias video or workshop, and professional mentoring.

Culturally responsive practices instruct educators to include student cultures and backgrounds in their lessons and activities to increase student connection to the subject. A mixed research study by Graves and Aston (2018) related to social-emotional curriculum indicates that the culturally responsive intervention program, Brothers of Ujima, that contains Afrocentric worldview principles has led to increased levels of engagement by Black male students and their parents. The authors further mentioned that there was a heightened sense of responsibility amongst the Black males towards academic tasks, and they required less repeated instruction. A culturally informed curriculum with Afro-centric values raises positive racial identity and equips Black male students with coping skills to manage difficult situations.

Ladson-Billings (2014), discusses the evolution of culturally responsive teaching to include a focus that acknowledges and values the cultural backgrounds of students and creates a learning environment that promotes academic rigor, accelerates student learning and fosters learning and a sense of belonging. Culturally responsive teaching can transform dependent learning into independent lifelong learning. Mitchell and Stewart (2012) concluded that:

Developing culturally responsive strategies to address the academic success of African American males in elementary, secondary, and higher education, although controversial and divisive to some, requires shifting the intervention paradigm from deficit beliefs and harmful schooling practices to strength-based, culturally relevant, empowerment models (p. 82).

Black male students who grew up in poverty and harsh socio-cultural realities can advance if they develop resilience against unfavorable conditions and draw inspiration

from their families, school, and community (McGowan et al., 2016). The narrative of Black men presented by McGowan et al. (2016) details their struggles and triumphs in their educational journey with their constant fight against racial microaggressions and stereotypical images of Black men. McGowan et al. (2016) states that in order to reframe Black male student triumph in education and build their resiliency, students must learn to navigate the college environment and have the desire to succeed. In addition, Black male students need positive inspiration, ongoing mentoring, and a supportive social network around them. First-generation college students can support their children emotionally and financially, as they are better prepared. Adams et al. (2020) propose an early college framework called the 3-R framework: rigorous instruction, real-world relevance, and supportive relationships. The authors further claim that the 3-R framework adopted in any school setting is beneficial, as the students identified the benefits of the framework though challenges persist. In the end, the benefit of the framework outweighs the challenges.

Keyes (2019) concluded that student engagement was high when there was a sense of belonging and a desire to engage, including in a classroom with a trusting environment, in addition to an inclusive classroom management style. Disengagement was lower when a teacher planned lessons that considered the academic and social needs of students (Keyes, 2019). Research further indicates that mentoring programs in higher education are considered valuable and effective. Mitchell and Stewart (2012) conducted a study that concluded that “mentoring had a positive impact on males who participated in optional study sessions, leadership, and mentorship activities” (p. 88). These mentoring programs can be used in K-12 education, which can lead to increase in college readiness.

Family support is vital and positively affects the academic achievement of Black students. First-time college-bound Black and Latino students experience tremendous hurdles in order to complete college. Hines et al. (2022) found that the impact of cultural agents like parents, school staff, mentors, and coaches cannot be overstated in relation to supporting and influencing a student's decision to pursue higher education. The collective efforts of a supportive community are crucial to shape the participants' ability to be college-ready and encourage them to be persistent. As a result, it is essential to develop a pipeline for Black male instructors within school systems and increase family and community support.

Darder and Torres (2017) explore how race, ethnicity, class, language, and culture intersect with education and how these factors impact the educational opportunities and outcomes of Latino students. The authors also examine the historical and sociopolitical contexts that have shaped the experiences of Latinos in the United States education system. To address these issues, Darder and Torres suggest that school districts promote bilingual education and address cultural biases by providing professional development for educators regarding cultural competency and bias awareness issues. In addition, they suggest that districts embrace diversity in the education system, hire more Latino teachers and administrators, and provide training for non-Latino educators on matters of diversity and inclusion.

As previously mentioned, the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) outlines eight components required for college and career readiness preparation. The components include topics such as discovering students' aspirations related to college, completing financial planning and affordability counseling, and

academic advising related to college readiness (NOSCA, 2010). Bhat and Stephenens (2021) recommend utilizing college and career readiness interventions aligned with the eight components outlined by NOSCA. Counselors and other related school personnel can utilize this model as a framework for college and career readiness preparation. Staff can provide college and career readiness interventions to students through a variety of ways, including classroom curriculum and small and large group settings (Bhat & Stephens, 2021). Hines et al. (2020) states that an early intervention approach within schools can help to alleviate barriers that Black male experience that impede their competitiveness as applicants in the college admission process.

While the literature outlines some interventions and solutions to address these challenges, there is still more work to be done. When students are not adequately prepared for the rigors of college courses, they may not persist to degree completion. It is crucial to understand the barriers that Black and Latino students continue to face in order to create pertinent interventions and solutions with the goal of providing an equitable college readiness culture for all students.

Pre-collegiate Programs

The college search process can be an overwhelming journey on its own; however, low income or first-generation students experience additional barriers. College readiness programs for Latino students can have a significant impact on the decisions that they make, potentially breaking the cycle of poverty or generational issues. The programs are designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to access and successfully complete college.

The Upward Bound program is a federally funded initiative that offers academic support, tutoring, and mentoring to high school students, which empowers them with the skills and confidence necessary to excel academically and encourages them to pursue postsecondary education. “The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education” (Upward Bound Program, 2023). AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is an educational program that equips students with essential skills for college readiness. AVID offers a variety of classroom activities, lesson plans, professional learning videos, and timely articles that are relevant to students. These tools help educators implement and refine instructional practices. They also help educators provide the key academic and social support students need to thrive. (“What AVID Is,” 2023) The program's primary goal is to empower students to excel academically and be prepared to pursue a postsecondary curriculum.

The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are a collection of federally funded initiatives that “includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs.” (“TRIO Programs,” 2023) These programs offer services like academic tutoring, counseling, mentoring, and assistance with financial aid applications to help participants succeed academically and successfully complete a college degree. “GEAR UP provides six-year or seven years grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. The program serves an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and following the cohort through high school”

(GEAR UP, 2023). The grant program is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Missouri College Advising Corps (MCAC) “seeks to increase the number of low income, first-generation, and underrepresented students entering and completing higher education” (“Missouri College Advising Corps: Final AmeriCorps Evaluation Report,” 2023). It places recent college graduates as full-time advisors in high schools to provide guidance regarding college and career readiness preparation. These advisors work directly with students, offering personalized assistance with college exploration, application submissions, financial aid, and transition to postsecondary education.

The programs described above are crucial for Black and Latino male students because they provide targeted support, mentorship, and resources to help address these challenges, which may include systemic barriers, socioeconomic inequalities, stereotypes, and lack of representation. By offering academic guidance, personal development, and exposure to college, pre-collegiate programs empower students to overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential in educational settings.

Conclusion

This research study explores the postsecondary struggles of historically marginalized populations of Black and Latino male students. The problem of practice focuses on the Black and Latino male student experience. It examines both the supports and barriers that have impacted college readiness and persistence for this group of students. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide potential solutions to improve the postsecondary process for this population of students and provide more equitable practices related to college readiness education. The research questions explore the

specific barriers that deter the college readiness preparation process for Black and Latino male students and, in contrast, the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students. The literature review explored the historical, social, and legislative background related to the college readiness preparation and persistence of these students. Challenges and barriers to college readiness and access were explored. In order to build and improve on current research, it is important to examine the current supports for college readiness preparation for historically marginalized students. It is vital for education systems to adequately address college readiness with this population of students in order to ameliorate the barriers that continue to hinder the postsecondary success of these students. The researchers are determined to suggest or formulate programs, policies, guidelines or curricular changes that will contribute to transforming the success of Black and Latino male students. In so doing, the researchers contributed and improved the current research, enhancing readiness, enrollment, retention, and persistence to graduation for Black and Latino male students. Culturally responsive teaching is necessary to amplify and elevate the voice and experiences of students of color and create pathways for their success. The years of systemic racism in educational policies and social oppression must be curtailed, as another generation of students of color cannot be sidelined from progress.

Chapter one provides the introduction, background of the problem, specific problem of practice, research questions and purpose of study. Also included in chapter one is a review of literature based on the population of study, and college readiness barriers, specific to both Black and Latino male students, all through the lens of historical, legislative, social and cultural perspectives of Black and Latino males. Chapter

two includes the research design and research questions, participants, data collection and instrumentation. Chapter three includes the data analysis and findings. Chapter four presents the conclusions, recommendations, and implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND DESIGN FOR ACTION

Black and Latino male students continue to experience systemic barriers in their pursuit of a postsecondary degree despite efforts to broaden opportunities for students. This population of students continues to graduate both high school and college at lower rates than their White and Asian peers. Upon review of relevant literature and data, overarching themes were discovered regarding the barriers that Black and Latino male students encounter related to college readiness preparation and persistence. Common barriers included first-generation student status, socioeconomic factors, and social capital. Questions still remain surrounding the factors that impact college access and readiness for these students. Overall, Black and Latino male students continue to experience barriers related to college readiness preparation and persistence, which negatively impacts their postsecondary transition success.

This research project explores the Black and Latino male student educational experience. It examines the systemic barriers that have impacted their college readiness, preparation and persistence through the lens of past and current historical, social, and academic perspectives. It aims to both explain how and why this population of students continues to face obstacles and uncover the factors, both positive and negative, that continue to impact the postsecondary transition and success of these students. Ultimately, understanding more about the experiences of this population will support efforts to ensure that Black and Latino male students are better prepared for college. Based on the research findings, the team created a toolkit in the form of an electronic app as the final product of the study. This toolkit considered the needs of both students and teachers/counselors and

outlined relevant information regarding the college process with the hopes of streamlining information and encouraging collaboration among the groups. The toolkit consisted of documents such as checklists, timelines, and resources for each group, and they were placed in a central location for easy access.

This chapter explored the research questions that unveiled the experience of Black and Latino males and the experiences of the educational staff who play a central role in the college readiness process of these students. Further, this chapter outlined the research design and research questions, participants, data collection and instrumentation, as well as the data analysis procedures.

Research Questions

To explore the experiences of Black male and Latino male students, two research questions were developed.

1. What are the barriers that deter college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?
2. What are the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?

The research questions are focused toward establishing the resource circumstances of the school as well as the students and how institutions utilize those resources. A general understanding of the resources to which students have access and those resources that they need, especially in comparison to the Black and Latino male students, is vital in this case.

The research questions guided this investigation. Researchers are seeking information and insight that can be shared with educators and stakeholders regarding the supports and barriers to college readiness preparation and matriculation for Black and Latino males.

Research Design

This is a qualitative study that aligns with a phenomenological design approach and utilizes a thick description of data collected from participants through a convenience sampling method (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). A Thematic Analysis (TA) method was used to analyze data collected through semi-structured, recorded Zoom interviews, observations, and analysis of situations. The phenomenological design examines the phenomenon which chronicles the everyday experiences of the participants while excluding the presuppositions of the investigators (Bliss, 2016). The researchers believe that the study of the phenomenon will reveal certain considerations for educators and stakeholders regarding academic and non-academic supports that are necessary for student success. These supports will inspire and enable Black and Latino males to pursue a college education.

This qualitative design provided the opportunity to analyze the lived experiences of Black and Latino male students and the barriers that they encounter to college readiness preparation and persistence through graduation. The design also ensured that the perspectives of educators are captured and included to address the objectives of the central research questions. The study employed an inductive analysis of data collected from participants to develop codes and themes in the effort to identify a solution to the problem (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Participants

Each group of participants responded to a series of questions related to the investigation of barriers and supports that affect college readiness preparation and matriculation for Black and Latino male students. The questions invoked reflection from the education professionals and the students that ascertained the data needed to understand the phenomenon of this study.

The researchers interviewed five veteran high school teachers. The teachers were screened to ensure that they have experience working with Black and Latino males. The researchers believe that the teachers' responses would inform them of their perspective regarding supports and barriers. Researchers also probed teachers to share their best practices which were codified, compiled and shared with educators and stakeholders via the study findings. The researchers believed in the importance of obtaining the perspectives of the teachers because they are the professionals who are charged with the responsibility to academically prepare students to be productive citizens. Listening to their concerns, cares, and commitments enabled researchers to share with students, parents, and the education community the college planning and preparation needs of Black and Latino males.

This project was also designed for the interview of five counselors. Counselors have a slightly different perspective from their teacher colleagues. They facilitate student exposure and preparation for transition into postsecondary education. Indeed, the possibility of college is a big part of that transition process. Investigators wanted to discover the support mechanisms that counselors provide to Black and Latino males in the classrooms and beyond to prepare them for life beyond high school. Their responses

broadened the researchers' understanding of the programs and/or partnerships that schools use to prepare students for postsecondary success.

Last, the investigators interviewed Black and Latino male students where they inquired about their perspectives relative to their experiences in Missouri schools as they prepared for college. The researchers desired to discover successful practices that are implemented by the respective schools which enabled them to excel towards success. They also wanted to learn the practices that the students deem to be detrimental to their progress.

The information from all the participants was analyzed and codified. Researchers identified patterns and themes from the data, and compiled a list of best practices and approaches that was shared with students, educators, and parents.

Participant Recruitment

An approach of convenience sampling was employed to select study participants, as it was unrealistic to interview every student in K-12 to study the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012). Counselor and teacher participants were recruited using convenience sampling through personal contact by one of the investigators (Curtis et al., 2000), while student participants were selected based on the results of a participant recruitment survey (see Appendix A) that was included in a recruitment email that fed into Triton Connect, as the campus notice boards and screens. The Black and Latino male college students were recruited from the University of Missouri-Saint Louis (UMSL) in collaboration with UMSL student associations, including the Black Student Association (BSA), Black Business Student Association, Associated Black Collegians, Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM), UMSL Libraries, Office of Student Involvement,

International Business Club, Pan-African Student Association (PASA), and the Hispanic Latino Association (HLA). A triangulated approach was used to recruit participants. Initially, the research team employed a recruitment survey (see Appendix B) containing questions aimed at obtaining answers to qualify potential participants. This form provided a pre-screen of the student participants. The form was distributed via a listserv for student organizations on Triton Connect, along with fliers containing a QR code placed throughout the campus. The investigators intended to persuade organization or association officials to provide a concise explanation and comprehensive overview of the purpose of the research study and why there was a need for participation or support, in hopes that they could encourage them to fill out the survey. The email included a link to the Google survey or flyer with a QR code, after submission, the feedback was sent to a spreadsheet in an UMSL database or rather Google Drive. After responses from the recruitment survey were received, an email was sent to potential participants that met the criteria and indicated an interest in participating in an interview to inform them that they qualify as participants and had been selected to be interviewed. Subsequently, a potential date and time for an interview were coordinated. In addition, another email with a Zoom interview link was sent to the participant in preparation for the interview. Finally, three outreach recruitment emails (see Appendices D, E, and F) in total were sent in an effort to recruit students, teachers and counselors. as well as keeping the potential participants associations and organizations updated.

The recruitment process for teachers and counselors included securing school district central office approval to contact, recruit and interview them. Researchers used point-investigators to contact the counselor and teachers that fit the criteria. The

counselors and teachers were recruited from University City and Webster Groves School District, particularly those who work with high school students. Individual researchers contacted potential participants by way of personal contact when they received district approval. After initial contact, the researchers followed the three-pronged emailing procedure to ensure uniformity in data collection and safeguards, which guides how e-mails are sent.

The researchers received all feedback from the recruitment surveys of potential study participants and saved it in a spreadsheet format in Google Drive on a secure server accessible solely to the research investigators. This was to safeguard the information of participants. Researchers accessed the form using their own secure password which consisted of a three-step authentication process, including a regular password, a one-time unique password (OTP), and a final biometric check.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Collecting perspectives from Black and Latino male students, educators, and counselors provided practitioners with data that represents a holistic view of college readiness barriers and facilitators that affect the study group in selecting the research instrument. There was the decision to develop an original version or adopt an existing instrument (Roberts, 2020). Consideration for adopting a currently existing research instrument and modifying it to fit research was not possible. The team of investigators searched for a readily available instrument. However, no usable instrument was identified after weeks of searching literature reviews for a tested and proven research instrument. The located instruments were not suitable for this study (Columbia University, 2023), nor were they relevant in achieving the study objectives. The pursuit of developing a new

instrument aimed at addressing the study topic and making it available for future researchers and research reviewers for adoption if there was interest in a follow-up study.

The researchers designed an instrument comprising 36 items (Appendix B). This instrument ascertained information that addressed the research questions regarding the barriers that exist for Black and Latino males in urban high schools in Missouri. Also, data was collected regarding the productive supports that inspire and propel students toward college readiness preparation. The instrument was designed to fully explore students' and educators' experiences, perspectives, and realities. Investigators undertook a process of instrument pretesting to ensure suitability, functionality, and design alignment. Two rounds of pretesting were carried out: the first major pretest on the whole set of questions aligned to the study design and a minor pretest to streamline interview questions specific to the participants: students, teachers, and counselors. The second pretest was done to ensure the research instrument's validity, credibility, and reliability. Minor edits were made to the flow of questions, further targeting questions to the study population and ensuring the questions were inclusive and could be generalized to the whole study population, thus achieving credibility and reliability. The changes to the instrument also ensured that the questions elicited useful results and confirmed alignment with the central research questions.

Collecting data concerning the college readiness of Black and Latino male students is critical, as is any other study, and needs a credible and reliable research instrument. This qualitative research collected and analyzed relevant qualitative data collected through interviews via Zoom meetings with teachers, counselors, and college freshmen and sophomores. In addition, an analysis of the environment, non-verbal cues,

and situations in which these students do their work and learn was done to try to make a holistic data collection process through Zoom recordings. In some instances, what is not said, accompanied by nonverbal cues, can be as important as what is said when analyzing meaning from the data (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). According to Denham and Onwuegbuzie (2013), the essential functions of nonverbal discussion, gestures, or responses in research serve many reasons, including clarification, juxtaposition, discovery, confirmation, emphasis, illustration, elaboration, complementarity, corroboration and verification, and effect, to mention a few. Interview question responses are anticipated to reflect a comprehensive understanding of institutions in Missouri schools on Black and Latino male students' struggles for success. This approach would be an intuitive way to connect the links from the research question to data analysis to the result and conclusion.

Table 1

Design Alignment Tool (Davidson, 2017: Adopted from Kanyongo)

Research questions: <i>List each research question (RQ) in a separate row below. Add or delete rows as needed.</i>	Data collection tools: <i>List which instrument(s) are used to collect data that will address each RQ</i>	Data points yielded: <i>List which specific questions/ variables/ scales of the instrument will address each RQ.</i>	Data source: <i>List which persons/ artifacts/ records will provide data</i>
RQ 1: What are the barriers that deter college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?	True CASHE Instrument (Appendix B)	College readiness Barriers Preparation	Teacher Counselor Students

		Persistence	
RQ 2: What are the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?	True CASHE Instrument (Appendix B)	College readiness Supports Success Academic supports Non-academic supports	Teacher Counselor Students

The study instrument was developed following the design alignment tool originally developed by Kanyongo (Table 1). It reflects the thinking process investigators borrowed from Davidson and Kanyongo on how to find answers for the study (Davidson, 2017: Adopted from Kanyongo). In this regard, the study topic is directly connected to the two research questions. Each study research question solicits answers through two or more interview questions to collect relevant data. The interview questions are then tailored toward specific study groups, yielding desired data points to the investigators. The tool keeps investigators focused and to the point while adhering strictly to the study design.

Data Collection Procedures

Once the study participant recruitment survey data was collected and evaluated by the research team, participants were selected for interviews. Those selected were notified via email, and an appointment time was arranged for the interview. Due to the size of the research team, several dates and times for interviews were identified and proposed to the

selected participants. A minimum of two members of the research team was required to be present at each interview. There was a unique set of interviews -and follow-up questions for each group that was interviewed: students, counselors, and teachers.

A Zoom meeting link with a unique access code for each participant, including a unique password for each meeting, was provided to access the interview meeting room. At the beginning of the interview, introductions between the research team and participants occurred, and participants received informed consent. The consent process involved a form (see Appendix C) that outlines that the participants are invited to interview for a research study. The consent form notified participants who were conducting the study along with the research team's contact information, why they have been selected as interviewees, the purpose of the research, the requirement for participation, and the expected time commitment. The form also described potential risks the participant might have experienced, how the data collected as to be used, how the data was to be stored, and for how long for privacy reasons. The form included compensation information the participant would receive for agreeing to partake in the study. The incentive for a participant was a \$10 gift card from Starbucks, which was emailed to the participant.

Once participants received the informed consent form and agreed to proceed with the interview, arrangements were made on when to complete the actual interviews. Interviews were captured using the recording feature in Zoom. The interviews were expected to last no more than one hour. After the interview, the interviewers shared the next steps with the participant, including a timeline for the research study. The participants were asked if they would like to receive the final findings of the research

study. The final product was shared with them via email. The research team sent a thank you note to each participant following the interview accompanying the incentive.

The researchers do not anticipate any major concerns in collecting the data for this project. However, if a participant experienced any stress or anxiety, the interview was to be immediately terminated to ensure the participant's mental and emotional well-being is maintained. The researcher carefully asked probing questions to enable her get clear and concise data, but at no point will the desire to retrieve data exceed the emotional stability of the participants in the study.

Data Analysis

After the interviews, data analysis was done. The procedure for analysis includes the processes of transcription, coding, and formulation of themes, which are all highly iterative. After researchers concluded data collection, they proceeded with processing the data for coding. Since the data collection process included individual interviews, the researchers had determined as a team that individual investigators would transcribe their interviews using Zoom for immediacy, memory accuracy, and precision, collating the data and situation of the interview as best as possible. The data was in the form of videos and transcripts recorded and saved on Zoom for 45 days, which was enough time to utilize the data. Through the video's background events, sounds, interviewee gestures, and environment, as minimal as it may sound, an analysis of the environment, non-verbal cues, and situations in which these students do their work and learn will be done to try and make a holistic data analysis. Due to the complexity of interviewing and the challenges of transcription, each researcher intended to interview and transcribe the interviews in which they participated. The investigators reviewed the interview

transcripts created by Zoom to clean the data, remove information inadvertently added, and correct any content that was mistranscribed by Zoom. The Zoom transcript was reviewed several times as part of the data cleaning process since transcription varied due to the many aspects of the transcription process, such as how fast interviewees speak, any accents they have, or whether they slur when speaking and even how advanced the transcription tool may be. The investigators went through each transcript by reading and re-reading each several times to thoroughly understand the information the interviewee conveyed before coding the data.

To maintain objectivity in the coding process, the paramount importance of individual investigators' personal reflexivity was emphasized. In the concept of reflexivity, one must be familiar with the fundamentals of qualitative inquiry (Speziale et al., 2003; van der Riet, 2012). According to Morse et al. (2002), these principles include maintaining methodological cohesion, working inductively, being a responsive investigator, obtaining an adequate and suitable sample, and attending to relational ethics. Reflexivity is an important aspect of qualitative research (Morse et al., 2002). However, it should be incorporated into all of the principles as a whole (van de Riet, 2012) and relate to the degree of influence the researchers exert, intentionally or unintentionally, on the findings (Jootun et al., 2009).

Coding can be a very subjective process; therefore, constant reflexivity was needed (Arber, 2006). Also, the process of coding is highly iterative. Researchers had blocks of codes and individual codes during the coding process. Codes were added and deleted, requiring reflectivity to avoid bias. After thoroughly coding, researchers unanimously agreed on the coding and moved forward to determine identifiable themes.

The themes gathered from the data collection process provided validity and supported the research questions.

These themes underwent multiple iterations with multiple codes formulating a theme or supporting theme. The codes and themes are subject to change in the process of data analysis completion to capture the most accurate meaning of the investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interview questions were linked to specific research questions, and researchers paired them with their resulting themes and linking them to the research questions as a beginning for addressing the problem of confounding Black and Latino male students in Missouri schools is needed. The analysis and report writing embraced a thick description approach to capture insights from the research process, the environment, the context, and participants, benefiting Black and Latino male students (Curtis et al., 2000).

Documentation of the Impacts of the Improvement Initiative

In the state of Missouri, Black and Latino male students are still acutely marginalized or undereducated in various ways, including intellectually, socially, and economically, which hinder their upward economic and social mobility career development-wise (Nichols & Schak, 2017). Following the Kanyongo logic model (Davidson, 2022), the researcher's input included time, funding, interview materials, organization, skills, and stakeholders. Various strategies were used, including but not limited to participants and study group sampling, interviews, data analysis, report writing, sharing of reports by the stakeholders, convening of meetings and other forums for discussion on ways for adoption and involving teachers, students, governments, and other partners.

Answers were provided to students, educators, and other stakeholders on the barriers Black and Latino males face within the college readiness process. For example, a college readiness toolkit was created as the final product of the study. The toolkit included relevant documents such as checklists, timelines, and resources for students, teachers, and counselors. The aim is to create a product that provides one centralized location of important documents and forms related to college readiness and access with the hopes of streamlining information and encouraging collaboration among students, teachers, and counselors. Furthermore, a compilation of -focused solutions that assisted Black and Latino males in preparing for college was done. The goal was to ensure consistent awareness and research-based information resounded through the hearts of educators and stakeholders, which causes change and growth for Black and Latino males' education journey. In the long term, hopes are that talks and strategies were developed for new programs taking root, resulting in a permanent increase in high school graduation and transition to college, a decrease in high school dropouts, an increase in higher education enrollment and early career choice decisions for Black and Latino males (Davidson, 2022).

This study's expectation for the long-term impact on Black and Latino student communities is substantial, including increased professionals among Black and Latino male Students, permanent, well-paying careers, family transformation, and transformation in the Black and Latino communities (Davidson, 2022). However, all this anticipated gain may take root faster and be sustained over time by a shift in culture among students and institution leadership fueled by political will. This might be

challenging initially, but if reception is positive, the outcome might be life-changing for many Black and Latino male Students.

Limitations

Research on college readiness preparation and persistence of Black and Latino male students can provide necessary insights into their experiences and challenges. However, with any research method, there are limitations that researchers need to be aware of. A limitation of this study is the potential for memory fatigue among the participants. The research involves exploring the experiences of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students. It is plausible that participants could encounter challenges in accurately recollecting specific details, particularly when a considerable period has elapsed since their encounters with college readiness preparation and persistence-related experiences. To minimize this limitation, efforts were made to create a comfortable and supportive environment during data collection, allowing participants to share their experiences openly and to the best of their ability.

Another limitation pertains to the small sample size of participants in the study. Despite diligent efforts to recruit a diverse and representative sample, the number of participants may not fully capture the complexity and diversity of the experiences of the target population. Consequently, the generalizability of the findings to the larger population of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students may be somewhat constrained. Researchers must interpret the results cautiously and acknowledge the limited scope when discussing implications. Black and Latino male students are not a homogenous group. A variety of intersecting identities can shape their lived experiences. It will be important to capture the diversity within their experiences with care and to

consider other complexities and unique challenges due to intersectionality as their experience is analyzed in this qualitative research.

Qualitative research relies heavily on the researchers' interpretation, which can introduce bias to the data collection results. Since this research explores the experiences and perceptions of the participants, the researchers ensured there is an in-depth analysis of interviews by multiple researchers to avoid their perspectives to impose the findings specifically when analyzing cause and effect factors that impact college readiness and persistence of Black and Latino male students. This maintained the trustworthiness of the conclusions.

Delimitations

Delimitations in research refer to the boundaries that researchers used to narrow the scope of the research study and which direction and focus to develop the research topic. Using convenience sampling can be seen as a delimitation of this study. Due to practical constraints and limited access to potential participants, convenience sampling was employed, which may result in a sample not fully representative of the broader population of interest. While this approach facilitates data collection, it may limit the external validity of the findings to a specific context or population.

The geographical location of the study is also a delimitation. This research focused on a specific region or community, and the findings may not readily apply to other areas with different social, economic, or cultural dynamics. The unique context of the chosen location should be acknowledged when considering the implications of the study's results. This study is specific as it focused on the experience of participants who are constituents of public high schools and attending a public university at a specific

developmental stage.

Additionally, the lack of parental perspective within the study presents a delimitation. Parental involvement and support play crucial roles in students' success. Not including their perspectives might limit a comprehensive understanding of the factors impacting college readiness preparation and persistence among historically marginalized Black and Latino male students. Future research should strive to incorporate parental perspectives to gain a more holistic view of the topic.

Lastly, the study's focus is solely on college readiness preparation and persistence of historically marginalized Black and Latino male college students without including the voices of high school students, which is another delimitation. High school experiences can significantly shape college readiness and aspirations, and without their input, a crucial aspect of the college success trajectory may be missing. Future research could explore the perspectives of both high school and college students to gain deeper insights into the factors influencing success among historically marginalized populations. Considering how qualitative research data collection and results can shift based on an extended amount of time could be beneficial for this specific research topic. By clearly defining the study's delimitations, the research will remain focused and manageable.

Summarize Connections of Actionable Knowledge Reviewed

The research informs the unique barriers that Black and Latino male students experience as they pursue higher education. Their college readiness and persistence are impacted by current practices, past historical events, and legislative policies that uphold today's educational structure. The researchers, being education practitioners within the State of Missouri, know firsthand the needs of the students they work with. Therefore, it

is necessary to consider a holistic approach to college readiness as they accompany their students in their journey toward completion.

The researchers analyzed the everyday experiences of Black and Latino male students, counselors, and teachers. These three constituents are all a part of the student journey. Administrators help push the district's vision, serve as decision-makers of curriculum approval and staff hiring, and are accountable to the students and families they serve. Administrator leaders help allocate funding that can facilitate the availability of resources to address the issues outlined. They are accountable for student success at a high level, which not only impacts students' lives but will result in the support the school or district will receive from the state. Teachers and counselors work with students year-round. They get to know their students through their academic performance and are constant investors in a student's education. They invest intellectual and emotional labor to help their students succeed. Administrators hold teachers and counselors accountable for low academic performance as they engage with the students the most and are primary witnesses to behavioral issues. Students are the recipients of education; therefore, their positive or negative experiences can help improve best practices for districts and schools to meet their needs. Their experience informs what resources they utilized, how helpful their school and counselors were, in which areas support was missing, and what external programs they utilized to supplement programs offered at the school.

In the next two chapters, the reader will understand, through the results of this study, what is in place today within the education system to support Black and Latino male students' journey toward college readiness and persistence. Through the recorded interviews, academic and non-academic factors will help prove that schools must

consider these factors when developing programming and curricula since they will show that both impact whether students receive the preparation to be college-ready students. Programs and resources that have facilitated their success will be revealed. This helped the researchers in compiling recommendations to assist Black and Latino male students in staying on track to student success and completing college. These recommendations will be best practices leaders can apply to their specific schools to increase college readiness and persistence for this student population.

Through the steps mentioned earlier, researchers discovered the intentionality of the services and support for Black and Latino male students. The research process will illuminate an understanding of this phenomenon. The data will enable scholar-practitioners to formulate a list of practices to better serve the students for postsecondary educational success.

Definition of Terms

- Achievement gap: The differences in educational performance and outcomes between marginalized and non-marginalized groups (Moreu & Brauer, 2021).
- College Readiness: Generally described as a student's ability to not only enroll but also academically succeed at credit-bearing institutions, specifically in courses that are general education and do not require remediation (Conley, 2007).
- Deculturalization: This is an intentional attempt to replace one culture and language with another that is fallaciously considered superior (Spring, 2016).
- Great migration: The movement of 6 million African Americans from the rural South to the Northeast, Midwest, and West states in the United States (Wilkerson, 2020).

- Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs): Any historically Black college or university that was established before 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).
- Indoctrinated: A process of teaching a person or a group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically by the educational system to assimilate and become oblivious to oppression (University of Oxford, 2023).
- Reflexivity: The changes brought about by researchers as a result of the research process and how these changes have affected the research process (Palaganas et al., 2017).
- Scholar-practitioners (researcher): “The interpreter, creator, user, evaluator, and re-creator of theory” (Bloomer & James, 2003, p. 249)
- Globalization: Word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information. (Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2022).
- Cultural genocide is the deliberate and systematic destruction of a culture. It is not ethical to destroy the culture of another group of human beings or change it without their consent. Each culture should be judged by its standards of

excellence and morality unless its cultural practices threaten to harm others physically or mentally. (Salem Press Encyclopedia, 2019).

CHAPTER 3

ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

This research project explored the educational experiences of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students. It examined the systemic barriers that have impacted college readiness preparation and persistence through the lens of historical and current social, legislative, cultural, and academic perspectives. A comprehensive analysis of these perspectives revealed this population's obstacles related to college readiness preparation and persistence. It aimed to explain why these students continue to experience these barriers and divulge the contributing factors that impact the postsecondary transition success of these students. Ultimately, a more thorough understanding of the experiences of this population will support efforts to ensure that Black and Latino male students are better prepared for college and, in turn, persist to degree completion. It is imperative to explore and better understand the current barriers and supports these students encounter regarding postsecondary success, specifically emphasizing college readiness, preparation and persistence.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

This research began with a fundamental interpretive analysis of and primary focus on understanding the factors that influence college readiness preparation and persistence of Black and Latino male students in their pursuit of postsecondary education attainment. The central phenomenon under investigation involved the lived experiences of high school counselors and teachers and their consequential impact on the decision-making processes for this student demographic. Black and Latino male first- and second-year college students were interviewed to gain insights into their experiences regarding

college readiness preparation. Aligned with the research problem and its corresponding objectives, the study aimed to gather information to better understand the barriers that deter as well as support college readiness preparation and the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest.

Persistent disparities in college enrollment and completion rates for Black and Latino male students underscore the need for a comprehensive examination of the factors that impact college readiness preparation and persistence for these groups. High school counselors and teachers play pivotal roles as they provide guidance related to the educational pathways of these students. In this chapter, we examine the approaches and designs utilized in this study which explores these factors, placing special emphasis on interviews conducted with high school counselors, teachers, as well as Black and Latino male college freshmen and sophomores.

Methods

The research methodology for this study is predominantly qualitative, emphasizing the collection of rich, context-specific data designed to capture the perspectives of educators working closely with Black and Latino male students. High school counselors and teachers were interviewed using semi-structured protocols designed to elicit their perspectives on factors that influence college readiness preparation and persistence among Black and Latino male students. These interviews allowed for a detailed exploration of their experiences, insights, and recommendations. Male first- and second-year college students from Black and Latino backgrounds underwent interviews employing semi-structured protocols specifically crafted to elicit a nuanced

comprehension of the distinctive challenges and opportunities encountered by historically marginalized Black and Latino male students within the realm of postsecondary education. The overarching objective was to derive insights that could inform strategic initiatives to augment their academic success and persistence.

Participants were carefully selected to ensure diversity in experience, school demographics, and geographic locations. The participants had extensive knowledge relevant to the research questions. This purposive sampling approach ensured that the sample included individuals who could provide valuable insight, information, and a representative range of perspectives. Qualitative data from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis. Emerging themes and patterns related to barriers, strategies, and recommendations were identified to comprehensively understand the issues.

Design

The design of this study is based on the intersectionality of the experiences of Black and Latino male students and the complex factors that impact their college readiness preparations and persistence. Several key elements define the study's design, including an intersectional approach, contextual inquiry, and collaborative research. This research recognizes the intersectionality of students' identities, considering how factors like race, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural backgrounds impact college readiness preparations and persistence. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the multifaceted challenges this student population encounters. The research design involved a comprehensive investigation into the distinctive contextual elements that shape the college readiness preparedness of Black and Latino male students during their initial years in higher education. An intricate comprehension of the challenges and

opportunities inherent in these environments is pivotal for devising interventions that demonstrate efficacy. The study further explored the specific professional contexts in which high school counselors and teachers work, recognizing that the unique challenges and opportunities within these settings are essential considerations for the development of impactful interventions. Collaborative engagement with educators and counselors throughout the research process cultivates a sense of partnership and ensures that the study's findings exhibit academic rigor and practical applicability. This collaborative methodology has been instrumental to foster the generation of practical and effective solutions.

The methodology and design of the study represents a robust effort to investigate the factors that influence college readiness preparation and persistence among these historically marginalized student populations. The integration of interviews with high school counselors and teachers will offer valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders in the educational journeys of Black and Latino male students. Furthermore, the study identifies both barriers and factors that support increased college readiness preparation and provides a foundation for evidence-based strategies to promote equitable access to higher education. Ultimately, this research serves as a critical step in enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes for Black and Latino male students.

Data Analysis

This research study specifically explored the following research questions:

1. What are the barriers that deter college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?

2. What are the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?

Both teachers and counselors have acknowledged the challenges encountered by Black and Latino students. They have further identified college readiness programming at their specific schools as well as the non-academic needs of their students. Counselors delineated diverse tiers of assistance impacting a student's educational trajectory. Examples include familial dynamics and socioeconomic strata. Teachers elaborated on perceptions students avoid and their avoidance or limitation to take more rigorous coursework like AP classes. The student interview results identified factors contributing to a positive student experience. The findings offer suggestions for school staff which include teacher perspectives and relationships with their students, understand the importance of a student's sense of belonging, and challenge current academic practices.

Once the interviews were completed, the recordings were uploaded to a secured shared drive. A team member was delegated the task of providing a transcription file based on the video recording download. Each member of the team watched each recording and reviewed the transcription document to become familiar with the content to capture important words as well as nonverbal messages. Conducting an analysis of each interview enabled team members to attain deeper insights into the experiences and perspectives conveyed by every interview participant.

Once the team had reviewed the raw data, they met to discuss each interview and identify codes and recurring themes. The research team created codes for each category of participants that captured key concepts and narratives from their answers. Through a

collaborative process of thematic analysis, the team reviewed and organized the codes into themes that captured the essence of the interviews.

The research team interviewed three participant groups: teachers, counselors, and students. The research tool was designed to elicit participants' responses regarding barriers that deter college readiness preparation and factors that support college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students. The research group emphasized the importance of interviewing these three different participant groups to gain a holistic understanding of barriers and supporting factors related to college readiness preparation and persistence for this population of students. The themes that emerged are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Teacher Perspectives and Experiences

During this investigation into the complex world of education and college readiness, enlightening interviews were conducted with five enthusiastic teachers who have devoted their careers to equipping students for the next phase of their lives. Outlined below are the viewpoints and tactics that surfaced during our discussion regarding the obstacles and successes of molding the minds of young Black and Latino men in a varied educational environment. The interviews began with a discussion of teacher qualifications and experience. We interviewed seasoned educators with 12-20 years of professional experience. Four of the five teachers had earned master's degrees. The conversation shifted to a discussion of the student demographics. The school boasts an impressive diversity, as 85% of students identify as African American, 10% as White, and 1% as Hispanic. Notably, the student body includes 45% males and a minuscule percentage of Latino students, indicating the unique fabric of the school community.

Sense of Belonging

The teachers who participated in the interviews shared that Black Male students enrolled in high-rigor classes in high school are more likely to succeed academically when they have a strong sense of belonging. As these students are often underrepresented in such settings, a supportive and inclusive environment becomes critical in helping them overcome the challenges they may encounter. Teachers suggested that building a sense of community and connection with peers and teachers can help these students persevere in their studies and achieve higher academic success. Teacher A remarked “It's about being honest with them, about the fact that they all have the ability, the capability, not the ability, the capability to do the work.” This sense of belonging contributes to improved self-esteem and confidence, challenges stereotypes, and helps bridge the achievement gap for Black male students in advanced academic settings.

Teacher A expressed an awareness of the societal messages that are conveyed to Black and Latino male students, which suggest that they are not good enough and must exert greater effort to receive the same amount of recognition. Accordingly, it is imperative that educators recognize the cultural differences and challenges that students might encounter. They must actively challenge stereotypes and stigmas to foster a positive narrative shift, and emphasize the significance of student empowerment rather than adopt a patronizing stance towards their abilities.

Academic Preparation

The teachers discussed how the school prepares students for college. The high school curriculum is designed to meet high expectations and is supplemented with individual support through tutoring. The teachers emphasized the importance of literacy

in the district, with a strong focus on reading, writing, and articulating thoughts. Teacher C remarked “Teaching reading and writing analytically. Insisting that they engage in reading and writing and not watering down because they might struggle.” It was particularly inspiring to learn that Teacher E is a first-generation college graduate and can relate to students whose families do not have a college degree.

Further exploration revealed how the teachers specifically prepare their students for college readiness. A strong foundation is laid by setting high and clear expectations, coupled with strong support. Teacher A reported investing time by providing after-school tutoring and counseling, which helped to create a relationship of trust between her and the students. Instilling confidence in their students and teaching them to trust themselves and build their self-assurance is critical to their approach. Being realistic and honest about the world, especially concerning societal prejudices and preconceived notions about college, was essential to the teachers’ pedagogy. The classroom environment focuses on authentic learning and transferable skills, with a strong emphasis on reading and writing, making her teaching style reminiscent of a college-level experience.

Supporting students in the classroom is crucial for a teacher's approach. The teachers indicated that offering one-on-one sessions after school to review paper drafts and peer editing other students' writings can help create a comfortable learning environment. Multiple teachers alluded to the importance of the revision process related to students’ writing assignments, including multiple drafts with feedback and revisions that would engage students in the learning process and instill confidence actively. Teacher C revealed the importance of mirroring the teaching style that students will encounter at the college level to ensure that students are better prepared when they

experience it. The teachers also remarked that including guest speakers from various professions and a writing center can also enhance the overall educational experience.

The teacher interviewees possess substantial experience to manage instruction for advanced coursework, including Advanced Placement and dual credit classes. Each teacher addressed concerns about students' academic deficiencies or non-alignment to grade level benchmarks, which implied that they required additional time for academic support. Teachers expressed the need to allocate extra resources, to help students attain the benchmarks for reading and writing performance. The writing process, particularly prewriting and drafting were highlighted as a means for students to receive feedback and promote improvement. Furthermore, there was a critique of school systems that facilitate student progression through the school system without a commitment to challenging them to enhance their learning experience.

Teachers emphasized their understanding that students may not grasp the content at the same time as their peers. They emphasized the significance of students' sustained engagement in study and practice, and affirmed that proficiency can be achieved through perseverance. In cases where students performed poorly on tests, teachers collaboratively explored improvement strategies, including reteaching and retesting. Additionally, a teacher acknowledged the variability in test taking abilities, recognizing that certain students may encounter challenges in this aspect. The teachers elaborated on the nature of learning as a progression and the continuous effort needed to address weaknesses. Furthermore, they advocated for setting higher expectations for students, asserting that they can achieve more than initially perceived, and they encouraged students to remain encouraged in the face of challenges. Notably, a teacher pointed out that Black males, in

particular, encounter heightened struggles and often harbor feelings of hopelessness regarding their abilities.

The challenge of maintaining engagement, focus, and attention among all students was acknowledged. The support for English Language Learner (ELL) students was discussed in relation to their proficiency levels, prompting adjustments to the curriculum to meet their specific needs. Reference was made to the aftermath of the pandemic, particularly concerning students who did not earn credits or are not performing at the expected grade level. When engaging in the classroom, students' express skepticism regarding the value of learning the material, prompting teachers to establish connections to real life scenarios and the importance of the development of transferable skills applicable to college and workplace contexts.

Building Student Relationships

Teachers mentioned that effective teaching requires teachers to establish a personal connection with their students, directly influencing student performance. Teachers tailored their instruction to better engage and support students by understanding their individual needs, learning styles, backgrounds, and interests. Teachers indicated that this personalized approach can lead to increased motivation, participation, and improved academic performance. There are also targeted programs like "Young Men of Excellence," which help guide students and inform them of their post-secondary options, including trade schools, technical programs, JROTC, and traditional colleges. Building a strong teacher-student relationship through genuine care and attention was key to unlocking each student's full potential in the classroom.

While building relationships between teachers and students is critical, teachers suggested building positive relationships with students' families and support systems outside of the school building was also important. Multiple teachers spoke of the importance of communicating with students' parents and families to engage them in their student's education. Teacher D spoke of the importance of calling families at home to not only discuss concerns in the classroom but also speak about students' positive experiences in the classroom to build positive relationships. However, Teacher A remarked, "I don't know that we necessarily actively involve the parents" in these engagements. The consensus among the teachers was that the school counselors typically lead engagement efforts with parents related to the postsecondary transition process. The reflections on engagement emphasized the importance of building more formal systems to connect parents, students, teachers, and counselors.

Moreover, several teachers highlighted the efficacy of engaging in one-on-one conversations with their students, fostering trust not only between educators and students but also within the students themselves. This approach aids in the development of interpersonal skills and creating an environment conducive to elevating students' confidence in their academic capabilities. These methods, not explicitly outlined in the curriculum or rubric, encompass aspects such as teaching students how to advocate for themselves and encouraging them to ask for help when needed. Challenging students to engage in analytical writing and allocating additional time for the student serves as a demonstration of the teacher's investment and genuine concern for the student's intellectual growth. Efforts directed towards connecting with first-generation students include offering additional support and resources, emphasizing a growth mindset, and

persistently conveying the belief in their capabilities. Many teachers mentioned keeping it real with their students and being transparent about what awaits them when they leave school.

Some teachers mentioned that parental involvement extends beyond standard teacher-parent conferences, encompassing proactive communication with parents regarding a student's need for assistance or improvements in areas where they previously struggled. However, they did mention that the challenge lies in effectively engaging parents who are less likely to attend such conferences. A salient point emphasized was to aid students in recognizing their inherent potential and fostering an inclusive classroom environment where self-deprecation and ridicule of peers for mistakes are discouraged. This supports their attempt to increase confidence in their capability to learn. The teacher's overarching goal is to create an authentic learning environment that instills confidence in the students' potential for success.

The interviews ended positively, with the teachers expressing their love for the profession and praising their school for supporting students during challenging times. They firmly believed in the potential of Black and Latino male students and the transformative power of education to create opportunities. Ultimately, these enlightening interviews revealed the complexities, nuances, and triumphs of preparing Black and Latino male students for college. It is a journey that requires educators' unwavering dedication, open communication, and commitment to breaking down barriers and building confidence. Education emerges as a powerful tool for creating opportunities and shaping the future.

Counselor Perspectives and Experiences

High school counselors implement the counseling curriculum while simultaneously addressing individual student needs. As the researchers embarked on their research to determine the barriers and supports for Black and Latino male students in college preparation and enrollment, the researchers interviewed counselors from Missouri high schools in the St. Louis region. The counselors shared a plethora of information related to their experiences as they have worked with Black and Latino males to enlighten the researchers regarding their inquiry into this phenomenon.

The five counselors selected consisted of three women and two men. They were chosen due to their expertise and experience of working with Black and Latino male students. They work in two small school districts in the St. Louis, Missouri region. Both districts have only one high school that serves distinctly different student populations. One of the schools has a majority African American population of approximately 68% and a Latino population of approximately 3%. Thirty-five percent of their students are African American males. The other high school serves a student population of approximately 25% African Americans. The number of Latino students they serve is considerably small. Counselors from both schools were identified via convenience sampling. Each counselor shared the number of years they had worked with Black and Latino males. Although their experiences ranged from 4-28 years, each responded to the same questions and focused on the strategies they use when working with Black and Latino male students.

During the interviews, all of the counselors identified a change in trends. Times have changed, and the need to address student needs/interests, and postsecondary

planning have also changed. Traditionally, the focus was college readiness and college preparation. Now, students and families have begun to explore more options available within postsecondary planning. Some students choose to explore career training programs with options for direct entry into the workforce. Students also explore options with limited time obligations to school and educational debt. While the shift continues, the workforce industry and leaders work to fulfill industry needs and student interests. Counselor D shared, “The world is becoming very diverse, and we have to move and shake with the times. We cannot become stuck in our ways.” Students who Embrace the widened scope of college and career readiness will be exposed to additional future opportunities.

College Preparation

For underserved and underrepresented college students such as Black and Latino males, college readiness and preparation are essential, particularly for first-generation college students. Students who are empowered with the confidence and capability to enroll and manage the academic and social challenges of the college experience increases their probability of academic success. The researchers define college readiness and preparation as students' ability to enroll and succeed in a credit-bearing institution. The student must also be able to engage in general education courses upon enrollment (Conley, 2007). During the interviews, counselors shared the programs and monitoring processes that they use to ensure that Black and Latino males are prepared for college. The counselors' responses and perspectives were weighted by several inherent factors which include, the type of student populations they serve, the percentage of Black and

Latino male students in their schools, and their culture regarding inclusivity and teacher biases.

The counselors noted the apathy amongst Black and Latino males regarding enrolling in advanced placement (AP) and honors classes. They surmised that their apprehension derives from several factors, such as the lack of preparation during their middle school years, high school teacher indifference towards them, and the lack of parental advocacy. Counselor C commented that some students do not enroll in some of the honors or AP courses due to their inability to accept the challenging rigor.

Their concerns regarding Black and Latino male middle school preparation were unanimous throughout the group. They all observed the lack of academic confidence in Black and Latino males to enroll in upper-level courses that would best prepare them for college. Counselor C shared, “It’s the motivation piece for them and having support for them in and out of the building.” The academic areas of concern for Black and Latino males are language arts, math, and science. They felt that Black and Latino males lacked the confidence to enter and remain in these upper-level classes, let alone deal with the rigor of those classes. Also, the counselors spoke greatly about the importance of literacy and reading at grade level. A student’s level of college readiness is often demonstrated by their performance on college readiness tests that require a great amount of reading and comprehension. Counselor B spoke about their district’s priority and focus to ensure that all students read on grade level, through a very intentional literacy plan.

Middle School to High School Preparation

College readiness begins before high school and requires the work of all involved in the educational process. The counselors in both school districts observed an academic

deficit that occurs during the middle school years that Black and Latino students never reconciled. In one district, students were precluded from enrolling in college prep courses based on the classes that they completed during their middle school years, which prohibited some Black and Latino students access to those college preparation opportunities despite their maturity, desire, and determination. These findings noted the critical academic deficit experienced during the middle school years which promotes the subsequent disinterest in academic pursuits for Black and Latino males (Jackson, 2019; Kafele, 2009). Collaboration between middle and high schools results in valuable high school information for middle school students, which contributes to their academic success according to Counselor D.

Teacher Indifference

The counselors also expressed the detrimental effect of perceived teacher indifference in the college prep courses toward Black and Latino males. As Black and Latino male students take college prep courses in high school, they are challenged to overcome their deficits and the discouragement of high school teachers. Several counselors noted, whether conscious or not, that their college prep teachers give grace and consideration to their White students exclusively. Bias policies and actions create an uncomfortable learning environment for students lacking confidence (Benson et al., 2021). They also expressed the importance of the counselors' role in transforming school cultures into welcoming and compassionate learning centers for all students, especially Black and Latino males. They also see themselves as mediators and advocates for students, as they share the importance of developing relationships and fostering fairness

and equity in classrooms. Caring for and supporting these students will significantly improve their chances of college success (Jackson et al., 2014).

Parental Engagement

Parental involvement is vital for students' academic success, particularly in the case of first-generation potential college attendees. The support and confidence that parents can transfer to their children in this stage of their lives are pivotal to their success (Cushman, 2006). The counselors did note concerns about the lack of parental advocacy on behalf of Black and Latino male students. According to Counselor E, the lack of parental advocacy derives from parents' overall discomfort in communicating with educators or the lack of understanding of the rights and privileges afforded to their students. Black and Latino parents do not challenge educators to provide accommodations and support that their students need, thus creating another level of inequity. Counselor E stated, "Some parents know how the game is played." Others do not.

Self-Advocacy

During the interviews, some counselors also discussed another common theme of self-advocacy in which students could not or struggled to express their needs. There was a consensus that Black and Latino male students do not express concerns or difficulties regarding college readiness and preparation. The counselors shared that they are aware of the student's difficulty because of their relationship with the student and their ability to see the student's needs. Counselor C stated, "Honestly, they don't report any challenges. I think, more or less, I see those challenges. They don't say."

College Readiness Programs

The diversity in college readiness programs that are offered to students emerged as a significant theme in some Missouri high schools. The counselors shared that some Black and Latino males have access to AP courses and honors curriculum, but they are reluctant to participate in these more rigorous courses. The combination of student and teacher apathy often discourages Black and Latino males from participating in upper-level classes. Counselors were also asked about other programs that promote success in college preparedness and enrollment, which involved mentors and partnerships. Counselors with extracurricular programming, such as mentoring and professional partnerships, believe that those programs empower Black and Latino males to confront academic challenges and stay focused. The counselors reported that the confidence that students receive through these partnerships is essential, considering the many challenges that they experience.

The counselors also mentioned the difficulty of sustaining these partnership and mentorship programs. As students advance through high school, identification of new mentors to maintain the support groups is challenging. For Black and Latino males, these partnerships are essential because they expose students to role models, mentors, and professionals who inspire them to matriculate through college (Weiston-Serdan, 2017). Despite the difficulty, the counselors agreed that these groups work.

Strengths and Growth Opportunities

Researchers also identified themes in the area of strength and growth opportunities. This question allowed counselors to reflect on the future efforts for preparing Black and Latino men for college readiness and enrollment. The counselors all

recognize that change is needed. They shared several different approaches towards more inclusive programs for Black and Latino male students. Yet, the overarching refrain was the need for professional development for middle and high school teachers. They agreed with scholars (Hammond, 2015) that training teachers to be aware of their biases and conscious of their cultural insensitivities would make a tremendous difference. They also shared that hiring teachers who can relate to students would increase empathy and compassion. The counselors believe their Black and Latino male students need more teacher advocacy. Indeed, it is incumbent upon teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators to advocate for the support of each child in their care (Wine, 2018).

Student Perspectives and Experiences

The student participants represented different backgrounds, high schools, and experiences. The two Black students represented different communities and circumstances. The father of one of the Black students was a college graduate. Although the student did not disclose his father's institution or level of collegiate attainment, he indicated that his father's college experience inspired and informed his matriculation. The other Black student was a first-generation college student, who heavily relied on his teachers and counselors to help him navigate college. He exclaimed that he was grateful for the support rendered by his high school to get him to this point in his life. The Latino participant was also a first-generation college attendee and needed school support to bridge the gap of knowledge and awareness of the college preparedness and matriculation process. He found that his high school filled that void for him. Although they had different life circumstances, their experiences and perspectives were similar. The students all expressed in their unique way that their high school culture significantly inspired them

to become lifelong learners. Each student shared their motivation to attend college and identified key people who inspired them to continue their education beyond high school.

Advanced Placement Courses

Each high school of the student respondents offered AP and honors classes; however, not all the students took advantage of those courses. For the two students who did enroll in the AP courses, they acknowledged that the rigor and expectations prepared them for their college courses. They were also quite appreciative of the advantage of having earned college credit while in high school. Based on their responses, the participants in AP and honors courses also achieved a degree of confidence that they needed to manage the future demands of college coursework. For these students, taking AP and honors classes proved to be a positive and empowering experience that helped propel them toward pursuing a college degree.

Roles of Counselors

The students also appreciated the role of their high school counselors in the college preparation process. Although their experiences were unique, the high school counselor's role was central to the transition to college for each of them. According to the students, the counselors shared and advised invaluable information about the college process. Students further confirmed that the counselors were pivotal in promoting the culture of college attendance by exposing students to various schools and their corresponding academic programs of interest. It was deduced that the counselors' role mattered for these Black and Latino males, especially for first-generation college students. This student's high school counselor helped him to decide that UMSL was the

best choice for him. All the students believed that their counselors were supportive and informative during the college preparation process.

Roles of Teachers

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of a teacher. Henry B. Adams stated, “A teacher affects eternity; He can never tell where his influence stops” (Wheeler, 2020, August 28). Although the students’ college preparatory processes were unique, each mentioned their teachers’ important roles. From writing recommendation letters to mentoring, teachers provided the support these young Black and Latino men needed to progress. Student One stated that his teacher served as a role model and advisor. Student three stated that his teacher shared information about college and helped “reduce some bumps in the road” for him. Student number two shared his belief in his teachers’ genuine concern for him. Although he thought that they had too much work at the time, he discovered that it prepared him for the college workload. Student three also shared that his teachers helped him with recommendation letters and shared their experiences and knowledge about college life with him.

From the first-generation college aspirant to the legacy graduate, young students need caring and nurturing adults around them as they transition into adulthood. One student expressed the utmost appreciation for his teacher/role model for making a difference in his life despite having a college-educated father who advises him. Without question, Black and Latino men especially need supportive educators to empower them to persevere through the many challenges they face every day (Jackson, 2019).

The research findings revealed factors that influence college readiness for Blacks and Latinos. These factors accommodate their sense of belonging, academic preparation,

the impact of teachers, parent involvement, and self-advocacy. This comprehensive understanding enables the research team to offer practical suggestions, recommendations, and specific action for educators to address the disparities experienced by Black and Latino males in their pursuit of higher education.

Beyond the conclusion of this study, a strategic plan should be proposed to influence and inform policy decisions, particularly tailored to the state of Missouri. The evolving perspectives on diversity, equity, and inclusion, along with the current landscape of education legislation, place the topic of support for the college readiness and persistence of Black and Latino males in a controversial position. However, this moment also offers an opportunity for an ongoing dialogue about the existing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) research, which supports the argument that this topic deserves attention and political consideration.

While the study focused on public schools in the St. Louis area, future research could explore the experiences of Black and Latino male students in private, charter, faith-based, or independent K-12 schools. Examining unique efforts and potential barriers in these distinct settings could provide valuable insights and additional support for the findings. Future research endeavors could identify effective training, certifications, or professional development opportunities for school staff, counselors, and teachers to support Black and Latino students better.

While some participants mentioned funding concerns, further exploration of funding inequities, specifically within St. Louis city and county, is warranted. That research could also consider programming and curriculum that could include infrastructure and physical facilities, offering an addition to the holistic perspective of the

educational landscape in the St. Louis area. Recognizing the research team's toolkit will exist within a mobile application that requires us to address potential disparities in technology access among students, families, and across school districts. In addition, certain factors relevant to this student population, such as the impact of sports, placement in special education courses, challenges with writing letters of recommendation, increased use of disciplinary measures, gang involvement, incarceration rates, and mental health that impact both of these communities, remain unexplored.

Summarize Connections of Actionable Knowledge Reviewed

This chapter elaborates on the qualitative methodology employed in the study. Extensive interviews were conducted with high school teachers, counselors, and Black and Latino male college freshman and sophomore students. The objective was to acquire a thorough comprehension of the factors that influence college readiness preparation and persistence of Black and Latino male students who have historically encountered educational disparities. A qualitative, phenomenological approach for the research study was adopted and deployed in semi-structured interviews. The conversations were designed to elicit rich narratives and insights into the experiences, challenges, and support systems that influence the college trajectories of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students.

The qualitative nature of the methodology was purposefully chosen to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of educators directly involved in the academic journeys of these students. Choosing a phenomenological approach, our goal was to reveal the essence of participants' experiences and understand the contextual factors that influence this student population's college readiness, preparation and persistence. The chosen

methodology aligns seamlessly with the overarching research questions that emphasize high school teachers' and counselors' lived experiences and perspectives. Through their narratives, we aim to identify key factors that impact the college readiness preparation and persistence of Black and Latino male students. Using qualitative interviews as a method, our examination of the experiences of Black and Latino male first- and second-year college students has deepened our theoretical understanding of the support they receive from secondary teachers and counselors. This exploration seeks to address the knowledge and awareness gap related to college readiness preparation and the matriculation process, especially for first-generation college students, while also considering the support they receive from their families. The qualitative data collected in this phase provided depth and context to complement the broader analysis in subsequent chapters.

The acknowledged limitations of qualitative research include its inherently context-specific findings, making generalizability a challenge. The perspectives the interviewed educators shared are inevitably shaped by their distinct contexts and experiences. Additionally, the research is constrained by insufficient Black and Latino male student participants, falling short of the intended sample size for this study. Nevertheless, despite these constraints, the gleaned insights remain valuable in comprehending the localized dynamics that contribute to the success of historically marginalized students.

The selected methodology is intricately linked with two theoretical frameworks: The Opportunity to Learn and the Social Justice frameworks. The Opportunity to Learn framework posits that fostering equitable conditions in formal schooling promotes

learning for all students (Carroll, 1989). The Social Justice framework asserts standpoints and scholarly traditions that actively engage with the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and various -isms. It recognizes that society is shaped by historically rooted, institutionally sanctioned stratification along socially constructed group lines that include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability (Cochran-Smith, 2022). The qualitative methodology employed in this chapter serves as a robust foundation to explore the intricate factors that influence the success of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students in their pursuit of higher education. By delving into the narratives of high school teachers, counselors, and Black and Latino male first-year college students and sophomores, the aim is to extract nuanced insights. These insights can potentially contribute to academic scholarship and the development of practical interventions. The focus is to enhance Black and Latino male students' sense of belonging and academic preparedness and foster meaningful relationships between this student population and educators. Ultimately, the goal is to advance equitable access and promote success in higher education.

The final chapter of this project focuses on dissemination efforts for improvement. Chapter four explores the research teams' recommendations based on the study results. It details the final product, the Persist Application. Lastly, chapter four outlines the implementation of the research group's dissemination plan.

CHAPTER 4

DISSEMINATION FOR IMPROVEMENT

Historically marginalized Black and Latino male students continue to encounter barriers that hinder access to college and college readiness. The history of education in the United States of America has presented barriers for Black and Latino male students during the college readiness process. Furthermore, Black and Latino males continue to score lower than their White peers on college readiness assessments. In addition, many Black and Latino male students are first-generation college students who are in need of the expertise of adults who are knowledgeable regarding the college process. The barriers associated with college access and college readiness preparation for Black and Latino students were explored to provide updated information for which educators, students, and policymakers can dismantle these barriers to college readiness.

The researchers sought to gain answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the barriers that deter college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?
2. What are the factors that support increased college readiness preparation for Black and Latino male students from a variety of urban high schools in the Midwest?

The research team solicited suggestions from high school teachers, counselors, and students using the interview process. The team used convenience sampling to obtain high school counselor and teacher interview participation. Freshman and sophomore Black and Latino male college students were identified to participate in the research study. The goal was to interview five certified teachers, five certified school

counselors, five Black male students, and five Latino male students. Five certified school counselors, five certified high school teachers, two Black male college students, and one male Latino student were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. The team collected data that was provided during the interviews to assist with the identification of best practices to promote the success of Black and Latino male students. The results of the interviews provided data which was interpreted to form themes that provided a strong foundation for the recommendations which are presented within this chapter. The dissemination of the results of the study as well as a viable tool to support the college readiness of Black and Latino males are presented as well.

Recommendations

The researchers have compiled a list of recommendations from the findings of this study. These recommendations are for all stakeholders who work to prepare Black and Latino males for college success. The data from the interviews was triangulated amongst the participant groups, and the themes extracted from the interviews were thoroughly discussed. The deliberations and debates yielded these considerations for educators, students, parents, mentors, community leaders, and legislators - all stakeholders. Since everyone is responsible to ensure that students receive the best education, all those involved must be informed.

The themes from this research detail the importance of building and maintaining positive, supportive relationships with Black and Latino males. These supportive relationships should develop into advocacy, advisory, and role models for Black and Latino males. The importance of establishing trust and relationship building between teachers, counselors, and students cannot be overstated as it relates to postsecondary

transition. Further, the research team recommends exposing students to college readiness preparation at an earlier age, including elementary and middle school. The researchers also recommend that teachers and counselors increase efforts to promote parental engagement and continue to advocate for Black and Latino males. Lastly, Black and Latino male students also play a significant role in preparing for college by advocating for themselves, competing in the classroom for excellence and scholarships and engaging with a high-rigor curriculum to prepare them for college.

The collaboration between teachers, counselors, and students is paramount for effective college readiness preparation and subsequent success. Teachers play a crucial role of imparting academic knowledge, fostering critical thinking skills, and providing guidance regarding coursework choices that align with college aspirations. Counselors bring valuable insights into the college application process, assisting with the selection of suitable institutions, navigating financial aid options, and providing emotional support. Meanwhile, students actively engaging in this collaboration gain a comprehensive understanding of their academic strengths and areas for improvement, receive personalized guidance on career paths, and develop crucial skills such as time management and goal setting. This collaborative effort ensures that Black and Latino male students are well-equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, and emotional resilience to navigate the challenges of higher education, fostering a holistic approach to college readiness preparation and persistence.

The importance of technology in today's world cannot be overstated. In the 21st century, technology has emerged as a driving force behind societal development. Technology has profoundly impacted various facets of contemporary society, including

education. Technology has become increasingly integrated into daily life. Most people have a smartphone in their pocket with access to various applications. The research aims to capitalize on this phenomenon by creating a digital toolkit in the form of a mobile application as the final product. Our desire is that the use of technology can provide a collaborative process related to college readiness preparation for students, parents, and school personnel.

Dissemination

To effectively disseminate our research study upon completion, a diversified and strategic approach that targets a broad audience will be adopted. A concise and visually engaging YouTube video will be created to simplify our research findings and make them easily accessible to the public. Social media platforms such as X, Facebook, and LinkedIn will share regular updates and interactive content. Additionally, webinars will be hosted in which interested parties can engage with the researchers directly and gain a deeper understanding of our research. The findings will be presented at academic and community conferences and organized school meetings to connect with the educational community and ensure a local impact. We will also collaborate with local school districts to foster dialogue and awareness among the vibrant student network. This comprehensive strategy will help us maximize the reach and impact of our research study and ensure its effective dissemination across various audiences.

The research team has disseminated our results at various professional development sessions and conferences within the surrounding area. On February 13, 2024, the team presented the findings at a professional development conference at St. Louis Public Schools. Subsequently, the team presented to University City High School

staff on March 1, 2024. Additionally, the team presented results to the CME church community on February 24, 2024, and March 9, 2024. Lastly, the team has submitted a proposal to present to the International Conference on Urban Education from November 6 to 9, 2024.

Implementation

In response to the critical need for tailored support, collaboration, and advocacy of postsecondary education for Black and Latino male students, we introduce "STL Persist," a web-based mobile application (app) dedicated to championing the postsecondary success of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students. The app is designed to address factors that impact college readiness preparation and persistence. "STL Persist" proposes to empower students to overcome barriers and provide guidance, empowerment, and community for these students as they navigate their educational journey to achieve their academic goals.

The app welcomes students with a user-friendly onboarding process and a platform tailored to their needs. The students are invited to create personalized user profiles. This enables tailored recommendations, allowing students to track their progress, set preferences, and receive personalized recommendations that align with their unique academic and personal needs. Central to "STL Persist" is its dynamic dashboard. The dashboard provides a real-time overview of academic milestones, upcoming tasks, and personalized recommendations, fostering a sense of achievement and progress. College readiness modules are embedded in the app to address factors that can impact a student's academic, financial, and emotional ability, ultimately contributing to improved retention and graduation rates. The app has a link to our team

blog post, which will have our team's insightful exploration on college readiness challenges and strategies for success.

College Readiness Modules

Academic Preparedness

The Academic Preparedness module within "STL Persist" is a virtual academic companion. It will offer subject-specific resources, study guides, and practice exams. Learning style assessments for personalized study strategies will cater to individual learning styles, fostering a strong academic foundation.

Financial Literacy

Recognizing the financial barriers students often encounter, "STL Persist" integrates a Financial Literacy section that includes budgeting tools, financial planning resources, and comprehensive information on scholarships, grants, and financial aid that empowers students to manage their economic challenges effectively.

Mental Health and Well-being

The Mental Health and Well-being feature acknowledges the importance of holistic support. Resources for stress management, coping strategies, and access to counseling services are embedded within the app. Regular check-ins and mood-tracking features promote emotional resilience. "STL Persist" aims to create a virtual community through forums and chat features that foster connections among students, enabling them to share experiences, seek advice, and build a sense of camaraderie. Mentorship programs connect current students with alums and professionals, creating a supportive network crucial for success.

Virtual Support Modules

Academic Advising

The academic advising feature offers virtual advising sessions and appointment scheduling. It equips students with guidance on course selection, study habits, and effective communication with professors.

Career Development

“STL Persist” empowers students for the future through a Career Development module. Resume-building tools, career exploration resources, and support for internships and job searches support a successful transition from academia to the professional world.

Peer Support Groups

“STL Persist” recognizes the strength in unity. Virtual support groups allow students to discuss challenges, share successes, and learn from one another. Periodic webinars and group discussions will cover relevant topics and foster a sense of belonging.

A comprehensive repository within the app stores articles, videos, and educational content. Regular updates will ensure that the content remains current, relevant, and supportive of the unique challenges that historically marginalized Black and Latino male students encounter. The app strategically incorporates push notifications to deliver reminders of important deadlines, events, and personalized tips. Motivational messages and success stories are integrated to inspire and uplift students throughout their academic journey.

“STL Persist” is committed to continuous improvement. The app collected user feedback through forms and surveys. Regular updates incorporated user insights and ensured alignment with evolving needs. Data security is a top priority. Security measures included data encryption for sensitive information, regular security audits, and adherence to data protection regulations to create a safe and secure environment.

“STL Persist” is more than just a mobile application; it is a companion designed to empower and uplift historically marginalized Black and Latino male students as they persist toward postsecondary success. The use of innovative features that will address college readiness preparation, community-building elements, and ongoing support will catapult “STL Persist” toward the redefinition of the narrative of postsecondary success for these students, ensuring that they not only persist, but thrive in their academic endeavors.

As mentioned above, the research team will develop a digital mobile application (app) as a toolkit to contribute to the college readiness and persistence of Black and Latino male students. Our team is committed to fostering a meaningful social and political impact to address the identified challenges. To achieve this, the dissemination plan encompasses diverse strategies. A comprehensive summary of our findings will be presented using YouTube video as a digital platform, providing accessible insights into the research outcomes. Additionally, various social media platforms will actively share application content and updates to reach a broader audience. Further, our commitment extends to engaging with the academic community through in-person conference sessions and virtual webinars. These forums will serve as platforms to showcase the tangible impact of the STL Persist mobile application for the educational journey of

Black and Latino male students, thus contributing to broader discussions and initiatives in the field.

The research team will cultivate interest in the STL Persist downloadable application to ensure the successful execution of this plan. While the primary beneficiaries of the application are students, its effective utilization as a digital toolkit requires the support of educators within the Missouri education system. To garner this support, the research team will strategically present the Persist application during local school board meetings, recognizing that these meetings as decision-making platforms impact schools. Simultaneously, these presentations to district Boards aim to capture the attention of parents who attend such meetings. Additionally, the research team will maintain a collaborative relationship with UMSL's College of Education graduate programs, ensuring that practitioners who are also students become aware of the potential benefits of the STL Persist application for their respective schools.

Potential partnerships with organizations that support students and families, such as College Bound, Missouri Advising Corps, and Upward Bound will significantly contribute to broadening the exposure and usage of the application. To garner support from guidance and college counselors, the research team will strategically collaborate with events such as the College Connection Conference (CUBE) hosted by the Missouri Association for College Admission Counseling. These events, predominantly attended by secondary and postsecondary counselors, will provide significant visibility for the application and foster its adoption within guidance offices of schools throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. The goal is to demonstrate that the STL Persist app serves as a consolidated and comprehensive companion, functioning as a resource tool

for students during their journey toward college readiness and persistence. This collaborative endeavor with practitioners will provide an avenue for constructive discourse concerning lacunae within the STL Persist application and facilitate the exploration of pragmatic remedies. One objective of the research team is to influence educational policy. Consequently, the team will develop succinct policy briefs which encapsulate pivotal findings and recommendations. These briefings will be disseminated during meetings that are attended by stakeholders such as policymakers, educational institutions, and entities engaged in educational initiatives.

These events serve as a conduit to reconcile the disparity between scholarly inquiry and practical application, providing opportunities for engagement with stakeholders from the community and parents. Our dissemination strategy focuses on engagement with students who are expected to benefit from the educational resource that the STL Persist application is poised to offer. We will employ an integrated approach, incorporating the aforementioned methods to ensure a comprehensive outreach strategy.

This dissertation has contributed significant scholarly insights into the intricate dynamics surrounding the postsecondary success of historically marginalized Black and Latino male students. The meticulous examination of the myriad factors that influence college readiness preparation and persistence using a rigorous academic lens boasts the significance of this study, as it has illuminated critical intersections of social stratification, educational policies, and institutional practices. Through detailed analysis and practical investigation, this research emphasizes the urgent need for thorough interventions that prioritize equity. These interventions are aimed at tackling deep-

rooted inequalities within systems and creating environments that are inclusive and supportive, ultimately leading to improved academic success for Black and Latino male students. This research underscores the ongoing need for interdisciplinary collaboration, policy reform, and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches to advance the educational attainment and holistic well-being of these student populations. Through exploration of the experiences and perspectives of groups that have been historically excluded or disadvantaged in academic conversations, this work serves as a catalyst for transformative action aimed at promoting educational equity and social justice in higher education.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Survey

[\(Survey Link\)](#)

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Study Participants Recruitment Survey

Project Title: The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence

Principal Investigator: Evans Mudanya

Co-Investigators: Ebonie Davis, Zehra Khan, Yvette A Levy, Janci Finkley, Molly Croghan Lizbeth Roman

Department Name: COE: Education Preparation and Leadership

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse

IRB Project Number: 2098395 SL

* To be sent as an attachment or link to a participant recruitment email.

Survey Questions:

- Email _____
- Your name _____
- College/ University attending _____
- Do you identify as Black male?
 - Yes
 - No
- Do you identify as Latino male ?
 - Yes
 - No
- Did you graduate from a St. Louis high school?
 - Yes
 - No
- Are you currently a freshman or sophomore in college?
 - Sophomore
 - Freshman
 - N/A

- Are you comfortable reading/speaking English?
 - Yes
 - No
- Are you comfortable participating in a 20-30 minute zoom meeting?
 - Yes
 - No

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

APPENDIX B
Research Instrument

Student Interview Questions

(11 questions, 3 follow-up questions)

Please tell us a little about yourself.

1. How did your high school prepare you for college?
2. What college prep courses did you take?
3. Can you tell us about any specific college preparation programming that was available to you in high school?
4. What remedial courses, if any, are available at your college/university?
5. Explain the role your school counselor played in your pre college experience?
6. Explain the role your teachers played in your pre college experience?
7. Tell me about any people that assisted you during your pre college experience?
 - a. People inside of school?
 - b. People outside of school?
8. Can you tell us about any barriers you faced during your pre college experience?
 - a. If you did experience barriers, how did you overcome them?
9. What advice would you give to teachers, counselors, and school staff on what students need to be prepared for college?
10. What, if anything, would you change about your pre college experience?
11. Do you have any other opinion, suggestions, thoughts or information in general that you would like to share with us?

Counselor Interview Questions

Please tell us a little about yourself.

(13 questions, 2 follow up questions)

1. What are your qualifications?
2. Where do you work?
3. How many years of experience do you have?
4. What population do you work with?
 - a. What percentage of your population is African American male?
 - b. What percentage of your population is Latino male?
5. What challenges do you see Black and Latino male students encounter in preparing to be college ready?
6. When you talk to Black and Latino male students, what are some of the challenges they report surrounding college readiness?
7. Do your Black and Latino male students have access to college readiness courses or programming that prepare them for college?
8. What are the challenges that Black and Latino male students face to access college readiness courses or programs?
9. Considering the challenges that Black and Latino male students face, what programs have you implemented in your schools to support them in their preparation of college readiness?
10. What data do you use to determine the success of your current college readiness program for Black and Latino male students?

11. What would you say are the strengths and growth opportunities in your school district and in the state of Missouri for Black and Latino male students college readiness?
12. How do you determine your students' social and emotional needs beyond the classroom?
13. Do you have any other opinion, suggestions, thoughts or information in general that you would like to share with us?

Teacher Interview Questions

Please tell us a little about yourself.

(11 questions, 3 follow-up question)

1. What are your qualifications?
2. Where do you work?
3. How many years of experience do you have?
4. What population do you work with?
 - a. What percentage of your population is African American male?
 - b. What percentage of your population is Latino male?
5. How does your school prepare Black and Latino male students to be college ready?
6. How do you prepare your Black and Latino male students to be college ready?
7. Have you incorporated any supports or programs within your classroom to support or increase college readiness for Black and Latino male students?

8. What challenges do you see Black and Latino male students face in preparing for college readiness?
9. How does your school involve parents in the students' college selection process?
10. Have you been challenged by stakeholders or your own conscience to think differently about your teaching practices in regards to college readiness?
 - a. If so, what changes are you making to address the problem?
11. Do you have any other opinion, suggestions, thoughts or information in general that you would like to share with us?

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Project Title: The Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students;
Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence

Principal Investigator: Evans Mudanya

Co-Investigators: Ebonie Davies, Zehra Khan, Yvette A Levy, Janci Finkley, Molly
Croghan Lizbeth Roman

Department Name: COE: Education Preparation and Leadership

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse

IRB Project Number: 2098395 SL

*To be administered after the recruitment survey information is analyzed and students meeting our criteria are identified.

1. You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose for this study is to analyze critical academic and non-academic facilitators and barriers that contribute to or impede the college readiness preparation, success and persistence of Black and Latino male students. The study aims to analyze critical factors influencing the success of Black and Latino male students in college readiness, access, and persistence. The study will further examine programs, policies, and support systems that significantly improve current methods to sustain college readiness and persistence success of Black and Latino males. To do this we will employ the OTL

conceptual framework specifically the pedagogy of poverty to discover the missing links in what Mean and Stevens (1993) describe as the core curriculum that builds wholesome learning experiences and students. Specifically, the study aims to initiate ways to cover existing gaps or develop a program needed in Missouri Public Schools. Although the focus of the study is on Black and Latino male students leaving high school, this will also channel other minority students aiming to cultivate an inclusive culture in Missouri Schools through an inclusive program, policy, or curricular changes as a deliverable.

2. Your participation will involve giving us your opinions by answering our interview questions. The interview will be conducted via zoom and the session will be recorded. The estimated length of the interview is 30-45 minutes.
3. There are no known risks associated with this research other than the potential for mild boredom or fatigue and it is totally confidential. If you experience any discomforts due to the questioning please let us know and we can discontinue the interview at any time. There is no loss of confidentiality risk associated with this research. If any, it can be reduced by assuring the interviewer asking them not to share their actual name if they wish to and providing them with relevant contact information to call for clarity.
4. The possible benefits to you from this research are the improvement of educational opportunities of other Black and Latino males to come after you, possibly including your immediate family and community.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research or withdraw your consent at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.
6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection) that would lead to disclosure of your data as well as any other information collected by the researcher.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Mr. Mudanya or the Faculty Advisor, (Dr. Shawn Woodhouse). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the University of Missouri–St. Louis Office of Research Compliance, at 314-516-5972 or irb@umsl.edu.

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

APPENDIX D

Research Interview Invitation Email

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Invitation to Zoom Interview Email

Project Title: The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining the Effectiveness of Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence

Principal Investigator: Evans Mudanya

Co-Investigators: Ebonie Davis, Zehra Khan, Yvette A Levy, Janci Finkley, Molly Croghan Lizbeth Roman

Department Name: COE: Education Preparation and Leadership

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse

IRB Project Number: 2098395 SL

*To be sent after the recruitment survey information is analyzed and students that meet study criteria are identified

Subject Line: Invitation for a Zoom Interview

Hello <name>

We are doctoral students at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. We are currently working on a research study and would like to invite you to participate in the study interview. We have identified you as a participant who may provide insight on the topic.

Topic: The Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence.

Interviews will take place via Zoom and should last no more than half an hour. The available interview times are as follows:

Date	Day	Time			
		From-To	From-To	From-To	From-To
	Monday	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
	Tuesday				
	Wednesday				
	Thursday				
	Friday				
	Saturday				
	Sunday				

Please let us know which day and time above suits your availability best and if you have any other questions.

Best Regard,

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

APPENDIX E

Prospective Student Participants Recruitment Email

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Students Participants Research Recruitment Email

Project Title: The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence

Principal Investigator: Evans Mudanya

Co-Investigators: Ebonie Davis, Zehra Khan, Yvette A Levy, Janci Finkley, Molly Croghan Lizbeth Roman

Department Name: COE: Education Preparation and Leadership

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse

IRB Project Number: 2098395 SL

*Recruitment email explaining a concise and comprehensive overview of the purpose of the research study

Subject Line: Invitation for Participation in a Research Study

Hello<Name>

Seven members of the doctoral program at the University of Missouri- St. Louis are seeking research study participants.

The research is focused on: The Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining the Effectiveness of Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence.

Criteria to be considered:

- Identify as Black male
- Identify as Latino male

- Graduate from a St. Louis high school
- Currently a freshman or sophomore in college

Interviews will take place via Zoom and should last no more than 45 minutes. If interested, please fill out the following form and the research team will reach out soon.

Best Regard,

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

Appendix F

Prospective Teacher Participants Recruitment Email

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Teacher Participants Research Recruitment Email

Project Title: The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence

Principal Investigator: Evans Mudanya

Co-Investigators: Ebonie Davis, Zehra Khan, Yvette A Levy, Janci Finkley, Molly Croghan Lizbeth Roman

Department Name: COE: Education Preparation and Leadership

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse

IRB Project Number: 2098395 SL

*Recruitment email explaining a concise and comprehensive overview of the purpose of the research study

Subject Line: Invitation for Participation in a Research Study

Hello <Name>

Seven members of the doctoral program at the University of Missouri- St. Louis College of Education are seeking research study participants.

The research is focused on: The Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining the Effectiveness of Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence.

Criteria to be considered:

- A certified teacher
- Work with Black male students
- Work with Latino male students

Interviews will take place via Zoom and should last no more than 45 minutes. The research team will reach out soon.

Best Regard,

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

Appendix G

Prospective Counselor Participants Recruitment Email

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Counselor Participants Research Recruitment Email

Project Title: The Postsecondary Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence

Principal Investigator: Evans Mudanya

Co-Investigators: Ebonie Davis, Zehra Khan, Yvette A Levy, Janci Finkley, Molly Croghan Lizbeth Roman

Department Name: COE: Education Preparation and Leadership

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Shawn Woodhouse

IRB Project Number: 2098395 SL

*Recruitment email explaining a concise and comprehensive overview of the purpose of the research study

Subject Line: Invitation for Participation in a Research Study

Hello<Name>

Seven members of the doctoral program at the University of Missouri- St. Louis College of Education are seeking research study participants.

The research is focused on: The Success of Historically Marginalized Black and Latino Male Students: Examining the Effectiveness of Factors that Impact College Readiness and Persistence.

Criteria to be considered:

- Be a certified counselor
- Work with Black male students
- Work with Latino male students

Interviews will take place via Zoom and should last no more than 45 minutes. The research team will reach out soon.

Best Regard,

The True CASHE Team
UMSL College of Education

Appendix H

Recruitment Flier

To be distributed to organizations for purposes of student recruitment.

**ARTICIPANTS
NEEDED FOR
STUDY**

IRB Project Number 20983355 IRB Review Number 398137
Approval Date October 17, 2023

**FOR MORE INFO
SCAN THE QR
CODE**

**The Postsecondary Success of Black and
Latino Male Students: Examining Factors
That Impact College Readiness and
Persistence**

Appendix I

Dissemination Process

STL Persist Web based App: <https://www.jotform.com/app/231695607047158>

STL Persist Blog: <https://znq589.wixsite.com/persist>

STL Persist Youtube Page: <https://www.youtube.com/@STLPersist>