

Noncognitive Variables and Their Impact on Enrollment
of African American Males in Higher Education

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to identify the nonacademic reasons that preclude African American males from enrolling in college after high school completion. The examination of this study evolved as a result of an abundance of African American males choosing not to enroll in college after completing high school. A mixed-methods research design was utilized to answer the 6 research questions posed in this study. Within the 6 research questions, 4 were quantitative and 2 were qualitative. The quantitative questions were hypothesized to test the predictive value of certain demographic variables that garner college enrollment statistically. Participants in the study included 22 African American male high school seniors who had chosen not to enroll in college after high school completion and 22 African American male high school seniors who had chosen to enroll in college after high school completion. Data were collected from both groups using a survey instrument and structured interviews.

Findings revealed the results of the dissertation implementation were consistent with the answers to the research questions and hypotheses. It was apparent that the (a) lack of a significant male role model and (b) insufficient school preparation considerably hindered the college enrollment of African American males. Additional findings in the study revealed (a) lack of finances, (b) lack of self-confidence, (c) lack of family support and influence, and (d) military as other prominent noncognitive variables that prevented African American males from stepping foot on a college campus. Further, the research indicated that, in order for more African American males to pursue a higher education after high school completion, high schools need to provide (a) assistance with the financial-aid process, (b) campus mentoring programs, (c) American College Admissions Test and Student Assessment Test preparation assistance, and (d) career guidance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Today, African American males are lagging in obtaining a higher education. According to the American Council on Education's (2006) annual status report on minorities in higher education, African American males have the lowest college enrollment rates of all statistical groups based on race and gender.

Twenty years ago, 30.0% of African American male high school graduates (ages 18 to 24) were enrolled in college compared with 28.0% of same-age Black females and 41.0% of White males. Today, 37.0% of Black men are enrolled in college compared with 42.0% of African American women and 44.5% of White males. Although there are more African American males enrolling in college today than 20 years ago, other groups have outstripped them in enrollment rates (Cross & Slater, 2000). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005b), there were 1,434,000 African American females enrolled in college, but only 864,000 African American males enrolled. As a result of the latter, it can be noted that, within the African American community, male educational dominance does not play a vital role. This is a notion that negatively impacts the African American male species. Thus, it is evident that African American males are being surpassed and highly represented by their meeker counterpart, the African American female (Cross & Slater, 2000).

For the first time in history, the world is witnessing a situation in the beginning of the 21st century where, within the African American population in the United States, African American females are positioned to obtain more leadership and other important roles than their male counterparts (Kaba, 2005). Table 1 displays the data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2002) regarding the national college enrollment of 18- to 24-year-old high school graduates based on gender and race.

Table 1

National College Enrollment of 18- to 24-Year-Old High School Graduates

Gender	Race	Percentage
Male	Black	33.8
Male	White	41.9
Female	Black	43.9

Statement of the Problem

Since the latter half of the 20th century, African American males are exemplifying increasing rates of educational underperformance in higher education (Cross & Slater, 2000). Defined as a monolithic group with little hope of survival or success (Garibaldi, 1992), African American males are reflecting the declaration of the former by their lack of positive performance in higher education, particularly in the measurable area of enrollment. According to the National Center of Education Statistics (1997), alarming numbers of African American males are vanishing from college rosters and university commencements. These declining rates of enrollment will ultimately pose serious problems for several parties, namely the entire African American community and all remaining Americans.

In the African American community, this trend would erode the relative earning power of African American men, greatly undermine their status in the Black family, and further hasten the disintegration of the traditional Black family with all the social and economic consequences which that implies (Slater, 1994). According to Cross and Slater (2000), “if this trend that has carried on for over the past fourteen years were to continue

unabated into the future, by the year 2070 African American men would disappear altogether from the halls of higher education and ultimately the interior of society” (p. 82). As a result of these consequences, African American males will be at risk for creating a premature dead end on the road to racial, economic, and social equality, significantly lessening their probability for success while constructing their own demise.

Defining major issues. Why are our nation’s African American males not enrolling in postsecondary institutions of higher education? According to Freeman (1997), the answer to the question is very clear to those who are a part of the same culture. However, in order for society to intervene and develop a solution for the problem, the major issues must be addressed in a more universal method that is comprehensible to all.

Various cognitive and noncognitive variables are the reigning forces behind the decision-making abilities of African American males. Whether they decide to attend college or not, many subissues that exist within the variables play a detrimental role in the educational apprehensions of African American males. However, noncognitive variables tend to play a more starring role.

Cross and Slater (2000) suggested that social, psychological, and economic issues create negative influences among African American males on whether or not to attend college. In regard to social issues, too many African American males do not understand that education is the ultimate tool to long-term success and upward mobility. The early influences of peer pressure and media propaganda deprive many of them the chance to consider a postsecondary education. As a result, many African American males end up in prison trying to obtain the material things (i.e., flashy clothes, jewelry, and expensive cars) that the media (hip hop or rap songs, music videos, and reality TV shows) present to

them and of which their peers approve. Many of them have a sole focus of obtaining either a football contract, basketball contract, or rap contract to become instant millionaires. Thus, this promise of instant gratification that permeates popular culture and the “get rich or die trying” mentality has resulted in more Black men being in prison than in college. The growing number of Black males going to prison rather than college is a more probable destination during adolescence and young adulthood. Noguera (1995) found that 1 out of every 3 Black males between the ages of 18 and 30 were either incarcerated or in some way ensnared by the criminal justice system. Thus, in 2000, approximately 791,600 African American males between the ages of 18 and 35 were in prison while 603,032 were enrolled in college (Justice Policy Institute, 2002). In regard to college-aged (18-24) African American males, in 2005, a total of 193,000 African American males were in prison and 530,000 were enrolled in college, therefore, making the college:imprisonment ratio 2.8:1.0 (Justice Policy Institute, 2002).

As for psychological issues, many African American males are raised in single-parent homes that lack the presence of a father figure. Due to this lack of a stable male parent in the household, young Black males are not instructed on the virtues and benefits of education. They tend to regard a postsecondary education as an aspect that is useless and well above their reach (Cross & Slater, 2000). The absence of a successful Black male role model is another hindering psychological issue. Many African American males do not have successful male role models to look up to (i.e., at school, church, or home) who display the same characteristics as them. Therefore, this notion leaves a large number of African American males with no source of positive aspirations or living examples to follow (Slater, 1994).

As the third major issue, Freeman (1997) noted that economics plays the most

vital role in an African American male's decision to attend college. The lack of money to attend college, increasing tuition rates to persist in college, and no guarantee of obtaining a job once college is completed are all issues that African American males undergo when it comes to the choice between economics and education. Many African American males come from low-income families where neither parent has more than a high school diploma. Due to this lack of education that their parents possess, many African American males do not obtain the required test scores to get into college and are less knowledgeable about the financial-aid process and other forms of funding to attend college (Lang, 1992). If not attending college by way of an athletic scholarship, many African American males interpret their low-income environment as a loss of hope for a college education (Freeman, 1997).

Due to the above-referenced issues that arise in the lives of African Americans, a large number of African American males get lost in the education process. Many of them disappear between the high school graduation and college enrollment stage (Freeman, 1997). Nonetheless, it can be acknowledged that the above-stated social, psychological, and economic issues are some of the various indicators that determine whether or not African American males choose to enroll in a postsecondary institution of higher education. Furthermore, in view of the need for explanations for these students' lack of higher education enrollment, this study identified the noncognitive variables that hinder or prevent African American males from enrolling in postsecondary institutions of higher education.

Purpose of the Research Study

In a book on college choice, Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper (1999) acknowledged the lack of African American males in pursuit of a higher education. The authors stated,

We do not yet fully understand the sociological factors that influence African American male students. Given the current level of concern about this population, this topic clearly merits more research. Special attention may need to be given to African American males because the factors that influence their educational aspirations are less certain. (pp. 28-29)

Thus, the purpose of this study was to identify the reasons why African American males fail to enroll in college. A further purpose of this study was to examine the noncognitive variables that have a significant impact on African American men and their decisions to not enroll in college.

Research Questions

The study addressed six research questions. A student survey and structured interviews were the data-collection source for each research question. The research questions were the following:

1. Do particular demographic variables predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
2. Does school preparation predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
3. Does self-concept predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
4. Does social support predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
5. What noncognitive variables contribute to the low enrollment of African American male high school graduates in higher education?
6. What factors would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion?

Definition of Terms

To develop a common understanding of the terms that were used in this study, definitions are provided below.

Educational underperformance. This term refers to the act of learning that is below level or quantity.

Monolithic. For the purposes of this applied dissertation, monolithic refers to acting as a single uniform whole that is often rigid.

Popular culture. This term refers to the shared knowledge of a specific group at a specific time.

Instant gratification. In this study, instant gratification refers to quick financial success that does not require educational attainment.

Attrition. This term refers to the reduction of numbers usually as a result of resignation, retirement, or death.

Persistence. In this study, persistence is referred to as the means to continue to exist especially past a usual, expected, or normal time.

Higher education. In this study, higher education is defined as an umbrella term that consists of all 4-year colleges, 2-year community or junior colleges, and universities in the United States.

African American and Black. In this study, the terms African American and Black are synonymous.

Parental capital. This term refers to a parents' economic, human, cultural, and social capital.

Chapter 2: Review of the Related Literature

This chapter details expert information related to the deficiency of African American males in higher education. A review of literature is discussed as it relates to the historical synopsis of African Americans in higher education, the status of African American males in higher education, theoretical approaches of college choice, importance of higher education, societal and academic circumstances among African American males, attribution theory, and effects of noncognitive variables on the postsecondary enrollment of African American males.

Historical Synopsis of African Americans and African American Males

African American men and women have made some tremendous gains from a historical perspective. However, both groups tend to represent an abundance of literature that caters to an opposing view. According to Sturgeon (2005), African American men and women are perceived as the forgotten or lost ones in education. Why is this so for African Americans or more specifically African American men? In general, African American males are highly represented in literature from a deficit perspective. This deficit perspective focuses on the individual or group's weaknesses and societal barriers. For this reason, scholars who have used a deficit perspective lens have guided the majority of literature and other studies to examine the failing aspects of African American males. Categories such as single-parent homes, peer pressure, and poverty overwhelm the literature.

The scarcity of literature that provides successful methodologies, strategies, and approaches in college enrollment are an abnormality when African American males are discussed (Harris & Duhon, 1999; Polite & Davis, 1999). The prevalent theme is that African American male students need assistance to enroll in higher education. Thus,

decreasing rates of enrollment lead African American males to be described as an endangered species in education, most importantly in higher education (Wilson, 2000). This description causes scholars to delve into the essence of why African American males are becoming endangered in academia and leaving successful African American males as being viewed as an anomaly (Wilson, 2000). This deficit perspective is understood through the examination of African Americans and African American males from a historical point of view in relation to education.

African American Males in Higher Education

Today, as the country celebrates the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the case that ended legal segregation in American public schools, young African American men are, by most social indicators, unraveling at the seams (Hefner, 2004). Hefner argued that education in the African American community was once viewed as the key to living the American dream. It was also the Golden Fleece that best combated the vestiges of enslavement. However, it is now viewed by many young African American males as an unnecessary barrier that stands between them and making fast money.

Historically, educating African Americans has not been a priority of America (Woodson & Kunjunfu, 2000). Both the number of African American students attending college and universities and retention or attrition rates of those who do not attend have become the major issue of concern to the higher education community. The African American male enrollment in higher education in recent years has steadily declined despite the increasing number of African American high school graduates. However, if this trend continues, the Southern Regional Education Board (as cited in Woodson & Kunjunfu, 2000) has projected that even fewer African Americans will be enrolled in

college.

When discussing the education of African American males, Kunjufu (2001) identified African American males as being in a state of emergency. This emergency stems from the negative statistics that have categorized African American males, generalizing them from conception to adulthood. Kunjufu argued that these statistics, stereotypes, and expectations of society, especially from teachers, contribute to African American males' miserable predicament.

As for the importance of education for African American males, Green (1991) said,

The level of educational attainment is by and large the single most important variable in determining the relative economic and social status of African American males. Such factors as the formation of families and marriage rate, unemployment, health insurance coverage, the maintenance of independent households, and incarceration are all intimately connected with the amount or lack of education of African American males. The more education an African American male has, the more likely he is to be employed, self-supporting, and married, and the less likely to be in conflict with the criminal justice system. (p. 3)

Many African American males are open to sharing their experiences as a means to uncover their struggles to higher education enrollment. Davis's (1999) study revealed three major struggles of African American male students. The three major struggles were that African American males struggle to (a) become socially integrated in a community of peers who are supportive of academic prosperity, (b) overcome academic hurdles created by inadequate school preparation, and (c) combat hostile schooling environments that marginalize their presence on college campuses.

Harris (1996) agreed that African American males face many problems. He further declared that African American males must reframe the issues concerning them in colleges and universities. Reframing the issues consists of moving from a deficient model

to one of success. Harris stated, “African American males must move from a deficient ‘blame-the-victim’ model to one that says that African American males can be successful, but African Americans will be successful” (p. 92).

Theoretical Approaches of College Choice

According to Hossler and Stage (1992), the students’ decision to continue their education at the postsecondary level is known as “student college choice” (p. 426). Used in a variety of ways in college-choice literature, the theoretical structure of this term may be useful in understanding the behavior of students who elect not to attend college. Hossler and Stage (1992) argued that the concept of college choice is used to exemplify a range of postsecondary educational decisions, including the decision to go to college and enroll at a specific college.

Martin and Dixon (1991) found that the decision to attend college is generally a long-term process that resembles a funnel-like manner. In this process, students start with an extensive conception of higher education opportunities that are available to them. Last, they undergo a series of steps as a means to refine their perceptions into the choice of a single institution (Gilmore, Spiro, & Dolich, 1981; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Litten, 1982).

There are a variety of theoretical models in the literature; however, studies have utilized three models for studying college choice. The three models are (a) sociological or status attainment models, (b) econometric models, and (c) combined models (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith 1989; Hossler et al., 1999; Hossler & Stage, 1992). According to Stage and Hossler (1988), sociological and econometric models acknowledge college choice as a single decision, while the combined model sees it as a process.

Sociological models. Sociological models have observed issues that influence

students' decisions to attend college (Alvin & Otto, 1977; Boyle, 1966; Horvat, 1996; McDonough, 1997). Thus, the outcomes of these studies suggest that students' academic ability, socioeconomic background, and high school background positively influence their decisions to attend college or choose careers that lead to status attainment (Hossler et al., 1989; Hossler et al., 1999; Hossler & Stage, 1992). In comparison to the results of the latter studies, D. Chapman (1981) presented a theoretical model of college choice that concentrated on students' characteristics and external influences as important variables in the phenomenon of choice. Consequently, his model proposed that student choice is influenced by a set of student characteristics (i.e., socioeconomic status, aptitude, level of educational aspirations or expectations, and high school performance) in concert with three categories of external influences. The three categories are the (a) influence of significant persons, (b) fixed characteristics of the institution, and (c) institution's effort to communicate with students.

Econometric models. The econometric models are based on the assumption that students decide whether or not they will go to college on the basis of the benefits they will receive from earning a degree (Bishop, 1977; Kohn, Manksi, & Mundel, 1976; Manksi & Wise, 1983; Rander & Miller, 1970). According to these models, students take into account the cost of college and expense of leaving home and compare it to entering the job market or a career in the armed forces. Thus, the outcomes of econometric models show that the family's socioeconomic background, the parents' educational levels, expected cost, future earnings, high school characteristics, and college characteristics relate positively to students' decisions to attend college (Hossler et al., 1989; Hossler et al., 1999; Hossler & Stage, 1992).

Combined models. According to Hossler et al. (1989), combined models are

stage-based models that address the most important factors from both the sociological and econometric models and process of understanding how students select colleges.

Three major combined models have been used to study college choice. The three models are (a) Jackson's (1982) combined student choice model, (b) R. Chapman's (1984) five-stage theory of college choice model, and (c) Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) three-phase model. Thus, the latter combined models are very significant because they identify major factors affecting the consumer's decision-making process and enable researchers and policy makers to uncover opportunities for strategic interventions (Bateman & Kennedy, 1997; Hossler et al., 1989; Stage & Hossler, 1988).

Jackson's combined model of college choice. Under Jackson's (1982) college-choice model, the college-choice process is divided into three phases that consist of factors that influence student college choice. The three phases are (a) preference, (b) exclusion, and (c) evaluation. The preference phase is noted to reflect the sociological process of the college choice, while in the exclusion phase, students look at their options and resources to determine what is feasible before choosing a set of colleges. Thus, in the evaluation phase, students look at their remaining options and select the college that appears best for them. Furthermore, Jackson asserted that college costs, family background, and academic achievement have the strongest effect on college choice.

R. Chapman's five-stage theory of college choice model. R. Chapman (1984) developed a model that clarified the terminology that was used to describe the various stages of the college-choice process. In the first stage, known as the presearch stage, students initially recognize their want to pursue a postsecondary education. In the second stage, the search stage, students obtain information and compose a list of colleges that they are interested in attending. They decide which college application they are going to

submit in the third stage and which college to attend during the fourth stage. Thus, in the fifth and final stage, students are admitted into a postsecondary institution.

Hossler and Gallagher's three-phase model of college choice. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed a three-stage developmental model of college choice where students progress toward an increased understanding of their educational options. The authors referred to their three stages as predisposition, search, and choice. They argued that students move toward an increased understanding of their postsecondary options as they advance through high school.

In the first stage of the Hossler and Gallagher (1987) model, the predisposition stage, students determine whether or not they would like to enroll in college. Hossler and Gallagher noted that, as students make the decision to consider postsecondary education, they are said to be predisposed toward postsecondary education. In the second stage of the model, the search stage, students are searching for colleges to attend, and colleges are searching for students to enroll. Thus, during this stage, students eliminate many colleges from their choice set of colleges to consider, and in turn, institutions become capable of expanding their applicant pools. In the third stage, the choice stage, students narrow viable choices and make a final choice. Throughout this stage, colleges and universities have no impact upon students because they have already eliminated many of the choices that did not fit their needs. Overall, Hossler and Gallagher suggested that organizational factors and precollege experiences interact with individual factors to influence the college-selection process.

The Importance of a Higher Education

Many researchers (Garibaldi, 1991; Irvine, 1990; Ogbu, 1990; Reed, 1990; Watson, 1989) upheld the notion that a college education is a necessity for sufficient

employment in the future. According to V. Smith (1997), a postsecondary education is the best vehicle accessible for young people to obtain upward socioeconomic mobility. In a study done by Bowen (1977), it was found that many individuals obtain positive values from the college educational experience. Bowen further argued that college-trained individuals are better informed citizens who are more likely to engage in community involvement, get greater returns than others from given income levels, be more likely than others to consider the home and nurturing of children as vital priorities, save more, cope better with life's practical problems, and be healthier.

In comparison to Bowen (1977), Kezar (1997) reported that the college experience seems to enhance the caliber of an individual's work and personal life. V. Smith (1997) noted that there is a strong correlation between college graduation and increases in stable patterns of employment and higher earnings. Thus, with the presence of large gaps between the earnings of high school and college graduates, V. Smith further declared the obtainment of a college degree as an essential step for minorities who must participate in a worldwide competitive labor market.

The extent to which minorities obtain success in school and life is vital to the social, economic, and political feasibility of the nation. With African Americans representing 13% of the nation's population, the nation's work force and future leaders will depend on the effective schooling of minorities (Smith & Chunn, 1989). Cheek (1992) agreed that the nation's economic future will rely on the education of minorities. He further stated that, by ensuring that there is equal educational opportunity for African Americans and they take full advantage of such opportunities, this illustrates the best method for continuing racial progress in America.

Smith and Chunn (1989) revealed that a growing number of Black youth will

endure a bleak economic future because they are not being adequately equipped to participate in an economy that is undergoing fundamental structural change. According to Felice (1981), the number of years of education completed is the primary determinant of occupational success. Moreover, Wright (1981) indicated that inadequate basic preparation, including educational and personal development, is the most critical problem involving the higher education of Blacks in America.

Societal and Academic Circumstances of African American Males

Although all males in the United States appear to be faltering in their academic attainment (Tyre, 2006), African American males continue to fall behind other males and females on a variety of success measures, including academic ones. Important quality of life indicators suggest that, on average, African American males in America are in deep trouble. They lag behind African American females in higher education. This lack of interest in higher education is due to a number of factors.

Meyers (2000) found that African American males face formidable challenges to their educational development beginning in early childhood throughout the lifelong process of socialization. Thus, their achievement aspirations are frequently stifled by the social structure based on the negative stereotypes associated with their circumstances of birth. Majors and Mancini-Billson (1992) stated that the central dilemma of the African American male is his quest to exhibit masculinity; he is too often grounded in “masking strategies” (p. 2) that require him to deny and suppress his feelings. Unfortunately, this challenge is interpreted by society as assertiveness, hostility, and anger. In short, the African American male is misunderstood. This misunderstanding explains the fact that the African American male dies earlier and faster than White males from suicide, homicide, accidents, and stress-related illnesses. He is more deeply involved in criminal

and delinquent activities; he also drops out of school and is suspended more often than White youth (Majors & Mancini-Billson, 1992).

Majors and Mancini-Billson (1992) noted that it is difficult for the vast majority of Americans to understand that growing up young, Black, and male in our society often means hearing that it is not “cool” to be smart and seeing kids ridiculed and penalized by their peers for trying to achieve academically. Gaston (1986), in his poem “I Was Cool” (see Appendix A), captured the perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyle, and hindsight of Black males who are unconscious victims of the social and institutional racism that has conditioned their actions. The poem’s content is self-explanatory; thus, it briefly explores the cause-and-effect relationship of the parts to the whole as a means to reveal the web clearly in which the Black male finds himself entangled.

Incarceration and criminalization. African American males are increasingly becoming involved with criminal activities that lead to criminal careers with incarceration as the social sanction applied. In the United States, governments (state, local, and federal) spend substantial amounts of money to fight crime. In 2000, total expenditures for adult correctional facilities in the United States were \$34.1 billion. The main reason for massive spending on prisons is the ever-increasing prison population that is primarily composed of young African American males (Clayton, Hewitt, & Gaffney, 2004). According to Clayton et al., the United States crime statistics show that Blacks and Whites are overwhelmingly arrested for crimes with substantially more Blacks arrested than their proportion of the country’s population. In 2000, 69.7% of all those arrested in the United States were White, while 27.9% were Black. Lemelle (2002) noted that “Blacks consist of 13% of the national population, but 30% of citizens arrested, 41% of those in jail, and 49% of those in prison” (p. 146). These statistics support the notion

that there are more African American males in prison than in college. In 1965, fewer than 200,000 people of all races were in local jails and federal and state prisons (Kitwana, 2002). Williams (2003) noted that, in 1980, 463,700 African American males were enrolled in college and 143,000 African American males were incarcerated in the United States. In 2000, however, 603,032 African American males were enrolled in college, while 791,600 African American males were incarcerated in American jails and prisons (Justice Policy Institute, 2002). Thus, R. Smith (2005) contended that more African American males receive their general education degree in prison than graduate from college.

Boyum and Kleiman (2003) argued that the numbers of Blacks in jails and prisons in the United States are disproportionately high because they get punished more severely for crimes than other races or ethnic groups. They further noted that there were 1.5 million annual drug arrests in the United States and the majority of the 325,000 people incarcerated on drug charges were there for selling. African Americans tend to experience the most arrests even though they make up less than 14% of the total population. Boyum and Kleiman agreed that the country's mandatory sentencing laws contribute to the rapid increase of African American males behind bars, which is partly to blame for the dwindling college enrollment of African American males.

Blumenson and Nilsen (2002) pointed out that the war on drugs, combined with zero-tolerance policies that led to the suspension of 3.1 million students and expulsion of 87,000 students in 1998, highly contributed to the low enrollment rates of African American males in higher education. They agreed that mandatory punishments are applied in a draconian way without distinction between true threats of violence and genuinely low-risk situations. They further noted that 80% of students charged with drug

or alcohol infractions are suspended or expelled from school no matter how insignificant the amount. Thus, African American students are expelled from school at twice the rate of White students. Although African Americans are 13% of all monthly drug users, they are 55% of those convicted of drug possession. Blumenson and Nilsen noted that students who are convicted of a drug offense are temporarily or permanently ineligible for federal college loans and grants based on the Drug Free Student Loans Act of 1998. They further argued that

the war on drugs has spawned a second front--a war on education. The casualties of this war are all poor or lower income people who cannot afford to buy a private education; therefore, encumbering their ability to obtain a higher education. (p. 63)

Lack of school preparation and support. Getting a quality education for African American males begins in the public school system; however, by the time many African American males reach the fourth grade, they have already lost interest in learning. This loss of interest will likely cause them to face an aimless educational journey to nowhere. Contrary to African American females, the downfall of African American males begins around the latter half of elementary school (with the shift from hands-on group activities to the more theoretical and individual study) and continues throughout middle and high school where lack of support and high expectations often lead to discipline problems that administrators rebuke and peers and popular culture often reward (Chappell, 2007). According to Blake (1994), the primary socializing agent, elementary and secondary education, has negatively affected the achievements and self-concepts of African American men by disproportionately tracking them and not providing positive role models.

Across the nation, African American males face a series of hurdles in school.

These students are less likely to take courses that prepare them for college. They are also less likely to be challenged by their teachers because their teachers are not prepared emotionally or professionally to work with them. However, in contrast to their lack of teacher support, most African American males do well enough to earn a high school diploma, but that is generally their academic high point. Osborne (1999) noted that the lack of attention, support, or both that most African American males endure while in school causes them to find jobs, entertainment, and sports more appealing than education. He further declared that African American males choose work over college because it is easier for them to earn a livable wage with a high school diploma. They also find a steady paycheck more gratifying than the thought of 4 more years of school. In regard to entertainment and sports, Osborne argued that African American males focus on entertainment and sports because these are areas where they are known to attract attention and outperform everyone else. These are the areas where young African American males are the leaders and innovators. Moreover, entertainment and sports are highly admired by African American males because these areas encourage them to be creative, expressive, and unique. Thus, these adjectives are verbal sources of inspiration that school systems fail to execute.

Research by Clayton et al. (2004) showed that Black male youths by virtue of being male are imbued with an expectation of high status, yet by virtue of being African or minority, they are identified within the American social stratification system with low status; hence, low expectations are conveyed by the dominant ideological state structure: the schools. Thus, many Black and low-income youths penetrate the achievement ideology and recognize that they are not well placed to obtain one of the limited numbers of privileged slots available. This realization is reflected in the lack of teacher

expectancy, support, and encouragement for Black males in particular and prevalence of encountering school personnel who do not seem to care (Polite & Davis, 1999; Tucker, Herman, Pedersen, Vogel, & Reinke, 2000). Nonetheless, the kindergarten through Grade 12 school system is failing to impart to Black male youths the skills and aspirations necessary to enter into a higher education institution.

Cartledge (1999) found that the kindergarten through Grade 12 school system hurts African American males more than it helps them. He further noted that, among general school populations, African American males are the number one candidate for placement in programs for students with serious emotional disturbance and, thus, experience the poorest school outcomes. In comparison to Cartledge, Guetzloe (1996) reported that, of all the students in schools with and without disabilities, students placed in programs for serious emotional disturbance have the poorest outcomes in terms of academic underachievement, low graduation rates, and encounters with the criminal justice system. Moreover, African American students are one and a half times more likely than non-African American students to be identified as having serious emotional disturbance, particularly African American males (Coutinho & Oswald, 1998; Harry, 1994).

Labeling. Generally, people are biased in their judgments of different appearances. In the United States school system, students who look different are often judged differently. This form of bias in the school system specifically targets African American males. In a study done by Ross and Jackson (1991), it was discovered that teachers in the United States have negative expectations of African American male students and they have the lowest expectations of nonsubmissive, independent African American male students. As a result of bias judgments that are imposed by teachers,

African American male students wrongly receive labels such as *hyperactive* or *slow learner*, which haunt them for the remainder of their primary education (Kunjufu, 1991). Gordon, Gordon, and Nembhard (1994) quoted labeling as a discriminatory practice that negatively affects the academic performance of African American males. Thus, labels can have lasting effects on self-identification and self-esteem that affect issues of motivation and academic achievement for the remainder of the student's educational experience (Parham & McDavis, 1987).

Lack of male and minority teachers. Clayton et al. (2004) found that the low number of minority and Black male teachers is a great hindrance to young African American men successfully navigating the academic experience and emerging with the prerequisites for successful college enrollment. A large number of African American males are retained in high school due to disciplinary actions. Irvine (1990) argued that the behaviors disproportionately identified with male culture are often the basis for the latter disciplinary actions and far too often become cause for suspension and expulsion, which increase the likelihood of termination of the students' educational careers. The presence of male teachers, particularly of the same race and ethnicity, is a known ameliorative factor. A significant body of literature shows that teachers are less likely to deem inappropriate behavior sufficiently offensive to warrant bureaucratic disciplinary response and more likely attempt to cope with the behavior and change it if it is understandable from within their social experiential base (Clayton et al., 2004). Foster and Peele (1999) noted that men tend to be less affected by the spontaneous active and challenging behavior frequently encountered among boys and they are more likely to praise and encourage them. Moreover, successful African American teachers tend to develop a teaching style that capitalizes upon this type of outlook and expression (Lancer,

2002; Slaughter-Defoe & Nakagawa, 1990; Watson & Smitherman, 1996).

The lack of minority and African American male teachers is alarming. African Americans in the teaching profession have declined from 8.6% of the teaching force in 1980 to 7.4% in 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). State-mandated policies, practices, and testing are cited as the immediate cause for this decline. Thus, it is apparent that there is a need to increase recruitment, financial support for, and retention of African American teachers to help navigate African American males through the challenges of the educational pipeline.

Attribution Theory

The attribution theory is defined as how certain events happen and what factors or causes contribute to the outcome of these events or phenomena (Martinko, 1995).

According to Martinko, there are three types of attribution theory. There are those that (a) function to identify the cause of the event, (b) seek to identify the responsibility of the event, and (c) refer to personal qualities such as leadership and trustworthiness.

Literature and various studies examined the causation of what contributes to the lack of enrollment among African American males in higher education. According to Spradley (2001), peer pressure, poverty, and lack of family support are factors that contribute to the low enrollment of African American males in higher education.

In addition to the latter aspect, several models of attrition were examined. The dominating models were the following: Spady (1970) and Tinto (1975, 1987), Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) model of persistence derived from the Spady and Tinto work, and the Bean and Metzner (1985) model of attrition. It might seem that attrition and persistence are two sides of the same coin and one could extrapolate from findings on the former to assumptions about the latter. However, there is no evidence that this is the case.

Nevertheless, it is possible that models of student departure can serve as a guide to the exploratory investigation of persistence factors.

As for the dominating models, each model highlights a somewhat different view of the attrition issue, and they share a number of variables. Thus, in summary, those variables include the following broad factors: (a) family background; (b) peer relationships, support, and social integration, including extracurricular and leisure activities; (c) faculty contact and interactions and academic and classroom integration; (d) institutional factors, including an institution's commitment to the student; and (e) finance-related factors.

Factors in the Tinto (1975, 1987) model are similar to those in the Spady (1970) model on which it was built. Pascarella and Chapman (1983) saw these models as longitudinal with regard to persistence as well as dropout behavior, a function of the quality of students' interactions with the academic and social systems of college (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Bean and Metzner (1985) noted the lack of research that assessed the relative contribution of external environmental factors to explain the attrition process.

According to Christie and Dinham (1991), the frameworks derived from Tinto (1975, 1987) can serve as the basis for qualitative research to explore how students understand the temporal quality of their college careers and provide a richer understanding of how the processes implied by the framework are actually manifested in the college environment. These authors pointed out that investigating student perceptions is paramount. Furthermore, Pascarella and Chapman (1983) found that these models provide a potential useful framework for understanding the complex process of student persistence.

Noncognitive Variables

Traditionally, a student's lack of enrollment in higher education has been measured by evaluating variables related to students' academic achievement or performance as a predictor of participation. These types of variables are commonly known as cognitive variables. According to Schwartz and Washington (2002), cognitive variables are measured as a result of students' grades, grade point average (GPA), American College Admissions Test (ACT) scores, Student Assessment Test (SAT) scores, or class rank. Sedlacek (2004) argued that the Big Test, like the ACT and SAT, are inadequate for predicting which students should be admitted to our colleges and universities. He stated,

they bring information which is useful for some students but they are not as accurate at predicting academic success for women, minorities, or anyone who has not had a White, middle-class, Euro-centric, heterosexual, male experience in the American educational system. (p. 6)

Today, there is considerable controversy about the utilization of standardized test scores. It appears that standardized scores may be predictive for minority students but only when used with other cognitive measures such as high school grades and ranks (Schwartz & Washington, 2002). Because of this controversy, the need to broaden the scope of measurement from a traditional to a nontraditional approach has become a reality (Sedlacek, 2004). This nontraditional approach is known to use noncognitive variables to examine students as more than statistics. Noncognitive variables are influential in identifying the factors that negatively impact the enrollment of African American males in institutions of higher education. Noncognitive variables are variables that tend to measure a student's failure in forms other than GPA, SAT or ACT scores, or high school rank (cognitive variables).

In his research, Noguera (1995) identified social, psychological, and economic issues as the noncognitive variables that negatively impact the enrollment of African American males in higher education. These variables not only are good identifiers for academic failure, they are also indicators of what factors cause African American males not to enroll in an institution of higher education. Notable among these noncognitive variables identified by Noguera are peer pressure, media propaganda, single-parent homes, and poverty. Thus, these variables also serve as predictors of the failures for African American men in general.

In comparison to Noguera (1995), Lang (1992) pointed out that the academic preparation of Black students for higher education; the availability of family resources; access to institutional financial-aid resources; and institutional barriers to access, enrollment, and retention were specific factors that explain a disproportionately large share of the variance in the enrollment rates for African American males. Moreover, despite his formulized acknowledgments of the latter factors, Lang's research findings cited socioeconomic backgrounds of African American males as the reigning factor for nonparticipation and failure in higher education.

In the research of Sedlacek (2004), he defined *noncognitive* in reference to variables that are unpredictable but are lived experiences of nontraditional students. These variables are predictive in assessing what motivates students and what their perceptions are. Moreover, Sedlacek (2004) identified eight variables that are useful in the assessment of African American students, in particular African American males. The eight variables are positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, successfully handling the system (racism), preference for long-term goals, availability of a strong support person, leadership experience, community involvement, and knowledge acquired in a field. These

variables provide a unique guide when analyzed as factors for enrollment.

The measurement to determine whether these noncognitive variables provided any type of influence, assist with adjustment, or improve one's perceptions is measured in various forms. Thus, Sedlacek (2004) used questionnaires, short-answer questions, portfolios, essays, and application reviews. Moreover, as a result of his findings, Sedlacek (2004) found noncognitive variables to be effective in predicting student success in higher education. He also found the variables to be employed by many institutions in their recruitment and retention programs.

Parental influence. Social science research has established that, although parents matter a great deal in their children's educational future, not all parents are equally effective in their influence (Lareau, 2000). Parents' effectiveness depends upon their level of income and education. Some studies (Astin, Korn, & Green, 1987) upheld that parental financial support is directly associated with the educational attainment of students, particularly African American students. Astin et al. revealed that parental income has a direct relationship with college enrollment. They further argued that "the lower the family income, the poorer a minority student's prospects in higher education" (p. 36). Thus, they concluded that the decreased enrollment rates of students from low-income families are attributable to having less educated parents.

Bean and Metzner (1985) found that a relationship exists between college enrollment and father's educational level, mother's educational level, and both parents' level of education. They pointed out that, because parental education levels contribute to the estimate of enrollment proneness independently of other student variables, it cannot be argued that students of more educated parents enroll in college more often because they are more able academically. Astin (1982) noted that more educated parents exert

stronger pressure on students to enroll in college than less educated parents. Furthermore, it is presumed that college-educated parents exert greater expectations that their children will also attend college.

Family structure. In addition to parental income and education, family structure also plays an important role in educational attainment. Astone and McLanahan (1991) found that the negative consequences of growing up in a single-parent family only partly explains why children are less likely to graduate from high school, less likely to attend college, more likely to receive lower wages, more likely to marry early and subsequently divorce, and more likely to rely on welfare when they are adults. Children in single-parent families are subject to more permissive parenting standards for obedience, dating, and sex as well as generally less consistent parental expectations (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1978). As a result, children who grow up in families with more permissive and less consistent parenting styles have lower self-esteem and are generally less successful in school (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

The U.S. Census Bureau (2005a) found that 50% of all Black children in the United States are being raised in female single-parent homes. As for the absence of Black fathers, the concept of fatherhood is in trouble in Black homes throughout America (Browning & Browning, 1999). Davis and Miller (2004) argued that the absence of Black fathers in Black homes has contributed significantly to the deterioration of both family and community life. In a study done by Yost (2002), it was found that less is demanded of young males when fathers are absent from the home. He further stated that the latter deficit affects youth violence and aggression, substance abuse, academic achievement, cognitive performance, social and emotional adjustment, well-being, ethnic identity, and personality.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000), large numbers of Black fathers are not in the home because they are in jail or prison. In 1999, state and federal prisons held an estimated 667,900 fathers (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Fifty-nine percent were Black fathers. In his research, Raspberry (2002) indicated that the overuse of incarceration also has the effect of taking large numbers of Black fathers away from their families and out of their communities. He further noted that “Black prisoners are also likely to be family role models and disciplinarians (even when their own behavior is less than exemplary) and, as such, important in early socialization of the children, especially boys” (p. A29). Thus, the constant incarceration of Black fathers sustains the scarcity of positive role models for Black males. Kunjufu (1991) stated,

It is very difficult to be a man if you do not see positive male role models. Black boys who do not receive quality instruction, do not have a father present, nor male teachers, nor a Black minister are left with incompetent teachers, apathetic parents, mass media, and the streets. (p. 15)

Black child-rearing practices. It is commonly believed that the difference in academic achievement between Black males and females exists because Black families treat their boys and girls differently (Hare & Castenell, 1985). Hodges (1994) argued that the Black family is known to give more assistance to the Black female over the Black male. This notion is apparent through the amount of support and encouragement regarding educational interests given to Black females. According to Washington and Newman (1991), Black families unequally distribute their parental capital among boys and girls. This source of unequal distribution highly affects the postsecondary destinations of Black males and females.

In regard to the rearing of Black females, Young (1970) noted that, during infancy and early childhood, Black girls are nurtured more; they spend more time with their

mothers, are touched more, and are disciplined less severely than the Black boys. In contrast, Black boys are encouraged to develop more autonomy and independence, presumably to prepare them for masculine roles such as competitors and breadwinners. Young further noted that these gendered child-rearing practices change during adolescence. In a research study done on adolescents, Lewis (1975) found that Black mothers tend to be stronger disciplinarians toward their daughters than their sons. They have higher expectations for their daughters and expect more responsibility from them. Thus, in the research of Reid (1972), it was revealed that many Black women believed that their brothers were given more freedom, had preferential treatment, and were raised differently.

Allen (1978) argued that Black parents' gender-specific practices reflect a sense of responsibility for teaching their like-gender children the specifics of their future role in society. Perchance, many Black mothers, particularly single mothers, are preparing their daughters to be self-sufficient and independent in the event they become single parents, an experience that many Black females have a high probability of enduring. As for Black males, many Black fathers are not in the home. This results in many Black males not receiving sufficient academic support, discipline, and controls at home to help them navigate the multiple challenges that Black males face in American society. Thus, this notion tends to cause lower self-esteem and academic self-concept for Black males than for Black females (Allen, 1992).

In Lopez's (2003) ethnographic study, he examined the family experiences of young adult Black men and women of Caribbean descent who came from poor female-headed households and how these experiences shaped their outlook or disposition towards education. His findings showed that the young women experienced more

restrictions on their behavior and more structure at home than the young men. As a result, the daughters endured frequent interactions with family members and often served as institutional brokers for family members who need assistance, for example, with interpreting government correspondence. Thus, the latter experiences influenced the young women to develop a dual frame of reference that compares their future hopes and aspirations to the realities of their mothers' life experiences. Moreover, according to Lopez, they developed high educational aspirations as a means for avoiding the trappings of their mothers' lives.

In contrast to the young women, the young men held fewer household responsibilities, experienced more freedom, and had less supervision. Lopez (2003) found that the young men spent most of their time hanging out with their friends, dating, and working. Their sense of masculinity was derived not from a role of authority in the home, but from their personal interactions with their male friends or peers. In addition, Lopez revealed that the young men held ambivalent views towards education because they experience their social world (e.g., negative interactions with police and school personnel) as members of a stigmatized group.

In the conclusion of his research, Lopez (2003) noted that the home experiences of the young men and women revealed that family involvement and household responsibilities may protect Black girls from the negative influences outside the home. He stated, "these experiences pass down parents' cultural capital to produce a strong disposition towards education among young women and cultivate daughters' sense of competency and efficacy in the outside world" (p. 117). As for the young men, Lopez argued that they are at a serious disadvantage because they do not receive adequate guidance and supervision from their parents. This lack of parental capital in addition to

the negative experiences outside the home greatly undermines any positive disposition towards education among the young men. Lopez noted that the latter gender patterns strongly uphold a common saying in the Black community: “Black mothers raise their daughters and love their sons” (p. 132). He further argued that the gender disparity in socialization among Black males and females may contribute to the poor outcomes of Black males in education and other facets of life.

Peer influence. Several research studies indicated that peers have a strong influence on postsecondary enrollment. According to Trotter (1981), peers can influence the attitude, ambition, and academic achievement of adolescents. In a study done by Weis, Farrar, and Petrie (1989), it was discovered that Black students were encouraged to drop out of college-preparatory classes by fellow Black students. The general proposition is that peers who share similar attitudes and behaviors experience similar trajectories. Moreover, students benefit from having peers who are academically oriented and plan to pursue a college education (Hallinan, 1982; Kao, 2001). According to Hossler and Stage (1992), peer encouragement has a positive effect on postsecondary enrollment; however, the association is not as strong as socioeconomic and academic achievement. Particularly, students who have friends with college plans are more likely to have a strong predisposition for college attendance (Alvin & Otto, 1977; Carpenter & Fleishman, 1987; Falsey & Heyns, 1984).

The military. Another factor that decreases the number of Black men enrolling in college is their broad participation in the military (Bandow, 1991; Ellis, 1992; Hodges, 1994; Kitfield, 1994). The United States military is home to hundreds of thousands of young African Americans. Segal and Segal (2004) noted that Blacks make up 13% of the U.S. population; however, they compose 25% of the military services. Thus, the

percentage of Black soldiers is high due to large populations of high school students who are poor and Black and view the military as their most desirable option. In the military, Blacks are known to occupy more management positions in business, education, journalism, government, or any other significant sector of American society (Moskos, 1986).

Death rates. Increasing death rates among African American males influences low higher education enrollment rates. Significant numbers of these males die at a young age from unnatural causes. Thus, Black males represent the highest death rate from accidents and violence than any other race or ethnic group. Within the United States, Black males have one of the lowest life expectancies of all race and ethnic groups. Minino, Arisa, Kochanec, Murphy, and Smith (2002) found that the average life expectancy in the United States is 76.9 years. The life expectancy for Black females is 74.9 years and 68.2 for Black males. For White males, the life expectancy is 74.8 years and 80.0 years for White females.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2002), the total number of deaths by all causes for Blacks in the United States in 1999 was 285,064 with Black males accounting for 145,703 (51%) and Black females accounting for 139,361 (49%). Of the top 10 causes of death for all Blacks in 1999, HIV and AIDS (7,893) and homicide (7,648) ranked 7th and 8th, respectively. Among Black males, homicide (6,214) and HIV and AIDS (5,493) ranked 5th and 6th, respectively. Moreover, homicide was the leading cause of death for Black males ages 15 to 34.

Academic Interventions

Academic interventions are programs that provide services to underrepresented populations as a means to increase student academic performance, educational ambition,

and attainment. Jenifer (1990) noted academic interventions as the most important type of intervention program. She strongly believed that all children should have access to an environment that is conducive to learning. Jenifer further noted that residential schools and mentoring programs in the school and community should be implemented as a means to ensure the latter environment. Programs such as those discussed by Jenifer have emerged throughout the country, particularly on the campuses of historically Black colleges and universities. As the chief producer of African American college graduates, historically Black colleges and universities have taken on the task of creating and implementing intervention programs that seek to eradicate the academic failures of African Americans, particularly African American males.

In Tallahassee, Florida, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University implements a prestigious intervention program for at-risk adolescent African American males. Known as the Black Male College Explorers Program, this prevention and intervention program provides services to at-risk Black youth in Grades 7-11. Under the direction of the director of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's Black Male College Explorers Program, the Black Male College Explorers Program aims to increase the number of Black males graduating from high school, facilitate their admission to college, and increase their chances of earning a college degree (Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, 2008). In addition, the Black Male College Explorers Program provides developmental activities that expose students to college life as a means to influence their decisions to attend college after high school completion. Every summer, the program implements a 6-week overnight developmental camp that includes academic enhancement tutoring, enrichment activities, and weekly personal development seminars and workshops. The program also instills the positive presence of Black male adults by

hiring Black male high school teachers as tutors for the summer program (Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, 2008).

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher explored literature that engaged the topic of noncognitive variables that negatively impact the enrollment of African American males in higher education. Even though the literature and studies are scarce, the related literature provided insight into the various issues that impact the enrollment of African American males in higher education. It also highlighted various theoretical models that explain the structure of college choice. This limited supply encouraged the researcher to evaluate closely related material that could assist with building a foundation for this study. The review of literature focused on the history of African Americans and African American males and education, African American men in higher education, theoretical approaches of college choice, the importance of a higher education, societal and academic circumstances among African American males, the attribution theory, noncognitive variables, and academic intervention.

In addition, the review of literature contained prominent themes that identified the systemic failures in education, quality of student and teacher relationships, and level of awareness and preparedness regarding the college-enrollment process. These themes focused on the purpose of the study. Hence, the purpose of the study was to identify the noncognitive variables that negatively impact the enrollment of African American males in higher education.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used in gathering data for this study. The research design employed in this study is provided as well as a description of the participants, instruments, procedures used for data collection, hypotheses, and procedures used for data analysis.

Research Design

McMillan (2004) reported that a research design is the plan and structure utilized in a research study to provide credible answers to research questions. For this study, the researcher employed mixed-methods research with a qualitative and quantitative component to identify the noncognitive variables that impact the enrollment of African American males at institutions of higher education. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2006), mixed methods is a style of research that uses procedures for conducting research that are typically applied in both qualitative and quantitative studies. The purpose of this type of research design is to build upon the synergy and strength that exist between qualitative and quantitative methods in order to understand a given phenomenon more fully than is possible using either qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Gay et al., 2006). Thus, this research design that combines qualitative research with some quantitative research methods was the most appropriate methodology to address the research questions outlined in this study. This methodology permitted the capturing of information that is relevant to the research questions in this study because the data are the participant's own meaning and words. This method is also easier and less expensive to execute than any other research design (McMillan, 2004).

According to Creswell (2005), the mixed-methods approach is a valuable tool to use as a means to determine if two evaluations support similar conclusions. He further

acknowledged three options of mixed-methods research that are typically available for use in investigations similar to this study. The first option is the exploratory method where the qualitative data are secured first and given priority over the quantitative data (notated QUAL→ quan; the capitalization indicates priority, the arrow indicates qualitative data are gathered first, and then the quantitative data are gathered). The second option is the explanatory method where quantitative data collections occur first and take priority over the qualitative data (notated QUAN→ qual). Finally, the third option is the triangulation method where two types of data collection occur concurrently and rate equal priority (notated QUAN + QUAL).

Given that this research sought an in-depth evaluation of the influence of noncognitive variables on college enrollment and because it leaned primarily on the survey data (qualitative data), this study utilized an explanatory method to yield insight into the issues related to low college enrollment among African American males. Thus, this type of research enabled the design, implementation, and reporting of data to be straightforward.

The specific research designs that were used for this study were predictive correlational and descriptive. The predictive correlational design was utilized as the specific research design to answer quantitative Research Questions 1-4. According to Burns and Grove (2006), a predictive correlational design attempts to explore what factors predict or have an influence on another variable. The independent variable is used to describe the predictor variables that are thought to predict the outcome variables or dependent variable. Further, Gay and Airasian (2003) noted that these designs are widely used to predict student academic success in college based on measures such as high school grades, social support, and aptitude-test scores.

As for Research Questions 5 and 6, the descriptive research design was employed as the specific research design to answer the qualitative research questions. Gay and Airasian (2003) stated that a descriptive design determines and reports the possible causes of a phenomenon through the collection of data and answers to questions that concern the current subject of the study. Moreover, Isaac and Michael (1995) contended that the purpose of descriptive research is to determine systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest factually and accurately. Descriptive research does not aim to prove or disprove hypotheses or make predictions. It frequently uses surveys, questionnaires, and interviews to obtain the data needed. Isaac and Michael examined four characteristics in which surveys, questionnaires, and interviews should be utilized. The characteristics are the following:

1. To collect detailed factual information that describes the existing phenomena.
2. To identify problems or justify current conditions and practices.
3. To make comparisons and evaluations.
4. To determine what others are doing with similar problems or situations and benefit from their experience in making future plans and decisions.

Qualitative research. Merriam (1998) reported that qualitative research is a research concept that encompasses many kinds of inquiry that enable researchers to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with minimal disruption of the natural setting. It is rooted in the view that reality is formed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. In addition, it involves fieldwork, and the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.

The goal of any qualitative research is to find meaning from human behavior by exploring attitudes, beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and anxieties. Merriam and Simpson

(2000) stated that the goal of qualitative research is “to delineate the process of meaning-making, and describe how people make sense out of their experiences” (p. 98). Meaning-making is explored through the process of observation and data gathering that should be done, according to Patton (1990), in a nonthreatening and unobtrusive manner in order to build trust with those who are under study.

Aligned with the qualitative approach is grounded theory. The methodology that was used for this study included techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. Grounded theory aims at deriving theory from the analysis of multiple stages of data collection and interpretation (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Strauss and Corbin (1998) argued that grounded theory in qualitative research can refer not only to research about persons’ lives, stories, and behavior but also to organizational functions, social movements, or interactional relationships. Thus, the purpose of grounded theory is specifically designed to build theory related to complex social phenomena and allow for theory development in an area where research is meager.

Participants

The research sample for this study consisted of 44 African American male high school seniors from a predominately Black high school in a rural county in Florida that has a population of 45,658 people. Thus, to obtain variation, the research sample was divided into two samples of students. The two samples were 22 African American male high school seniors who were 18 years of age or older and had chosen not to attend college after high school completion and 22 African American male high school seniors who were 18 years of age or older and had chosen to attend college after high school completion.

The researcher chose to study samples that attended a predominately Black high

school because these particular ethnic-dominated schools produce large percentages of students who do not attend college. Table 2 displays data from the rural county's school district regarding the previous college-enrollment rates of high school students at the predominately Black high school.

Table 2

Previous College Enrollment Rates of the Rural High School

Year	No. of graduating seniors	Postsecondary enrollment	Postsecondary enrollment percentage
2004-2005	121	14	11.5
2005-2006	106	15	14.0

The selected sample size for this study was small; however, it was consistent in size with the qualitative research of Black males done by Spradley (1996). According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), to justify a sample, one must know the universe and all of the relevant variables, a task that is quite impossible. Generally, the best compromise is to include a sample with the widest possible range of variation in the phenomenon, settings, or people under study. Thus, to achieve a power of .80 with a large effect size at an alpha of .05, Cohen (1992) recommended 44 total participants. Therefore, 44 participants was the sample size used for this study. The size was large enough to include variability but small enough to be doable.

The method that was used to select the sample for this study was the purposive method. According to Gay and Airasian (2003), "in purposive sampling the researcher selects a sample based on his experience and knowledge of the group to be sampled" (p.

115). Moreover, purposive sampling was used to identify the reasons why African American males chose not to attend college after high school graduation. In addition, due to the method of purposive sampling, criteria were determined to qualify the participation of the 44 participants. The participants were selected according to the following criteria:

1. African American male high school senior who would graduate at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.
2. African American male high school senior who was 18 years of age or older.
3. African American male high school senior who would enroll in college upon high school completion.
4. African American male high school senior who would not enroll in college upon high school completion.

Research setting. The population selected for this study was African American males who were high school seniors at a predominately Black high school in a rural county in Florida who were certain to graduate at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. For privacy purposes, the school chosen for this study is referred to as the rural high school.

In 2008, the rural high school served students from rural areas that are characterized as having unstable populations. The school housed 1,118 students. Sixty-nine percent of these students received free or reduced-price lunch. The racial makeup of the student population was approximately 87.0% African American, 10.0% Hispanic, 2.0% interracial, 3.4% Caucasian, and 6.0% Asian.

As for gender, the rural high school's gender makeup was 47% male and 53% female. The rural high school's school district was a district of 28 schools, 6,515 students, and 1,081 employees. Among the employees were 453 classroom teachers. The

racial makeup of the classroom teacher population was 127 White, 315 Black, 8 Hispanic, and 3 American Indian.

The school district was located in the heart of a predominantly rural county located in Florida's central northwest panhandle region. The panhandle region of Florida is often considered the poorest area of the state. Thus, the rural county has continually ranked economically in the lowest quartile of the 67 Florida counties (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2006).

In regard to the deprivation of education experienced by most families living in the rural county, a total of 18,864 (65.2%) individuals 25 years or older have no postsecondary educational experiences. These low levels of educational attainment represent the inadequacies in postsecondary education preparedness for these residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Table 3 displays the low educational attainment levels of adults in the rural county compared to the state of Florida and national levels.

Table 3

Educational Attainment Levels of Rural County Adults Reported in Percentages

Degree	Rural county	Florida	Nation
Associate	21.9	28.8	27.4
Bachelor	8.0	14.3	15.5
Master or doctoral	4.9	8.1	8.9

Instruments

Two forms of instrumentation were used in this study. The instruments used were the Student Attribution Survey (SAS) and Student Perception Interview. Quantitative

data originated from the administration of the SAS to all research participants, and qualitative data originated from individual student perception interviews that were conducted between the researcher and 10 research participants (i.e., 5 who were not going to college and 5 who were going to college). Thus, both instruments were used to identify the noncognitive variables that impacted the enrollment of African American males in higher education.

SAS. The SAS (see Appendix B) was constructed using sample questions from two previously used surveys. The two surveys were the Noncognitive Questionnaire (NCQ; Sedlacek, 2004) used in 2000 to study the academic success of urban Black high school males in an enrichment precollege program and the Social Support Survey (Endecavage, 2000). The sample questions were slightly modified for a high school population. Some questions were also constructed by the researcher.

The NCQ was developed by Sedlacek (2004) as a means to predict the academic success of minority students. Items on the NCQ are designed to assess eight noncognitive variables. The variables are (a) positive self-concept, (b) realistic self-appraisal, (c) demonstrated community service, (d) knowledge acquired in the field, (e) successful leadership experience, (f) long-range goals, (g) ability to understand and cope with racism, and (h) availability of a strong support person or system. These variables were tested by Sedlacek and Brooks (1976), Tracey and Sedlacek (1984), Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1992), and Sedlacek (1988, 1989, 1990, 1991) and were found to be related to the academic success of students enrolled in college, particularly minority students. Each of the items on the NCQ is a question that asks participants about attitudes and perceptions prior to attending college. The questions pertain to educational expectations, present goals, educational aspirations, past accomplishments, and

involvement in community and leadership activities. This study aimed to expand the findings of Sedlacek (2004) by examining the predictive validity of the NCQ for the lack of academic persistence and success of African American male high school seniors who have chosen not to attend college after high school completion.

Sedlacek (2004) and Tracey and Sedlacek (1986) found that all multiple-choice items had adequate test-retest reliabilities (2-week estimates ranging from 0.74 to 0.94 for each item with a median value of 0.85). The open-ended items were rated by two judges for the following variables (with interrater reliability estimates presented in parentheses): long-range goals (0.89), academic relatedness goals (0.83), degree of difficulty of the listed accomplishments (0.88), overall number outside activities (1.00), leadership (0.89), academic relatedness of activities (0.98), and community involvement (0.94). Moreover, Tracey and Sedlacek (1987) found the NCQ to be content valid because it is “highly predictive of academic success and persistence for African American students” (p. 179).

The Social Support Survey (Endecavage, 2000) was the second previously used survey that the researcher acquired sample questions from to construct the student survey. The Social Support Survey is a 10-item questionnaire designed to assess the amount of support a student receives from family, friends, agencies, and institutions outside of college as a means to predict their success in college. Students rate each individual or group on a Likert-type scale, stating whether they agree or disagree with receiving support from that source. According to Endecavage’s research findings, social support is essential to college success, particularly in helping minority students make the transition from high school to college. Endecavage found the Social Support Survey to be content valid due to its high predictability of college success. It was also found to be reliable due to the similarities among participant responses to each question.

The SAS was designed to require no more than 45 minutes to administer. It consisted of 56 items that are fill-in, categorical, Likert-scale, and open-ended in format. There were 14 demographic items to identify the age of the participants, employment status, home structure, family members who attended college, and significant male or adult influence; 9 two-point Likert-scale items that assessed participants' school preparation; 17 five-point Likert-scale items that assessed the self-concept of participants; and 10 seven-point Likert-scale items that assessed social support. There were 6 open-ended items garnering the motives and needs of participants regarding present goals, past accomplishments, group affiliations, reasons for attending and not attending college, plans after high school, and factors needed to influence African American males to attend college after high school completion.

Student perception interview. Student perception interviews were used as the second method of data collection to identify the noncognitive variables that impacted the enrollment of African American males in higher education. The interview method was used because of its adaptability (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Interview questions were developed by the researcher. The researcher also developed and used an interview protocol (see Appendix C) that provided an outline of the interview sessions. The interview protocol is a measure that specifies the questions to be asked of each research participant, the sequence in which the questions are to be asked, and guidelines for what the interviewer is to say at the opening and closing of the interview (Gall et al., 2003). Interviews were conducted subsequent to the survey of research participants. Five participants from both research samples were randomly selected to participate in an interview session with the researcher. The interview questions were the following:

1. "How would you describe your current life situation?"

2. “What influenced your decision not to attend college after high school completion?”
3. “How important is education to you? What importance does your family place on education?”
4. “What problems and challenges do you encounter as an African American male high school student?”
5. “How would you describe the level of support available to you from teachers and staff?”
6. “How would you describe the quality of education you received from high school?”
7. “What do you think high schools can do to influence and help African American males to enroll in college after high school completion?”

According to Merriam (1998),

the interview process allows the interviewer to enter into the other person’s perspective, to find out what is on someone else’s mind. It is necessary in this process because behavior, feelings, replication of past events, and interpretation of the world around us cannot be observed. (p. 73)

Thus, interviews in this study sought to clarify the noncognitive variables that hinder African American males from enrolling in higher education based on the perceptions of 10 participants.

Structured interviews with open-ended questions were the type of interviews conducted for this study. Structured interviews are interviews in which the questions, their sequence, and their wording are fixed, but the interviewee may respond freely without limitations to preset response choices (Kerlinger, 1973). Open-ended questions in structured interviews supply a frame of reference for respondents’ answers but put a

minimum of restraint on the answers and their expression. Kerlinger stated the advantages of open-ended questions as follows:

Open-ended questions are flexible; they have possibilities of depth; they enable the interviewer to clear up misunderstanding (through probing); they enable the interviewer to detect ambiguity, to encourage cooperation and achieve rapport, and to make better estimates of respondents' true intentions, beliefs, and attitudes. (p. 484)

The data from the interviews served as triangulation for the primary data, the SAS. According to Cowman (1993), data triangulation is the collection of data from multiple sources for analysis in the same study with each source focused upon the phenomenon of interest. Triangulation is an ideal technique to proving credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In his study, Denzin (1978) examined four basic types of triangulation. The four basic types were the use of multiple data sources, multiple methods, multiple investigators, or multiple theories. Denzin's logic of triangulation was based on the premise that no single method can adequately solve a problem because different methods reveal different aspects of empirical reality (Patton, 1990). By triangulating, one can achieve the best of both methods, thereby alleviating bias on the part of the researcher (Patton, 1990). Thus, Lincoln and Guba agreed that triangulation is an ideal technique to providing credibility.

Pilot testing. To ensure the reliability of the student perception interview questions, the researcher conducted a pilot test prior to the final interview process. Gall et al. (2003) noted pilot testing as a small-scale preliminary investigation that is conducted to test the interview questions or interview schedule that will be used for research. During the pilot test, the researcher paid close attention to possible communication problems, evidence of inadequate motivation on the part of participants, threatening questions, and other clues that may suggest the need for rephrasing the questions or revising the

procedures (Gall et al., 2003). In this study, pilot interviews were conducted with 5 randomly chosen African American male high school seniors. At the conclusion of the pilot interviews, the participants were asked to provide feedback and recommendations on ways to improve the interview process. These individuals were not included in the 10 participants who were involved in the final interview process. Further, the goals of the pilot test were to help the researcher gain information needed to begin the study and provided the opportunity to implement the data-analysis strategies.

Content validity. The validity of an instrument refers to whether it actually measures what it is intended to measure (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1996). Content validity was conducted on both the SAS and the Student Perception Interview questions. In order to establish content validity, the researcher created a panel of 10 experts who consisted of teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors from the rural high school. The panel reviewed both instruments as a means to identify any vague items, vague directions, or unclear questions that the instruments may have contained. After the panel reviewed the instruments, they informed the researcher that both instruments (i.e., SAS and Student Perception Interview) were free of vague items or directions.

There were five teachers, two administrators, and three guidance counselors on the expert panel. The teachers who served on the panel were 12th-grade teachers with 10 or more years of teaching experience. These teachers served as panel experts because they were familiar with the comprehension ability of the participants. Also, their teaching experience equipped them with various reasons why students do not attend college after high school completion. The administrators who served on the panel were the rural high school's administrators who specialized in discipline and curriculum. These types of administrators are known to have an expertise in student departure and academic

achievement. Therefore, their participation on the panel was helpful in ensuring that the survey and interview questions formulated quality data to answer the study's research questions sufficiently. Three guidance counselors from the rural high school also served on the expert panel. The guidance counselors served as valuable experts on the panel because they were familiar with the home and academic backgrounds of the participants in the study.

Data-Collection Procedures

In November 2008, the researcher contacted the head guidance counselor of the rural high school to explain the selection and eligibility criteria for the research subjects. Shortly after the latter conversation, the guidance counselor obtained the names and contact information of African American males at the rural high school who met the following eligibility criteria:

1. Were 18 years of age or older.
2. Were high school seniors who would graduate at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.
3. Had elected to enroll or not enroll in college upon high school graduation.

Once eligible subjects were identified, the guidance counselor mailed a recruitment letter to each subject. The letter included an explanation of the study, instructions regarding the survey, interview sessions, the participation letter, and the consent form. The recruitment letter also invited subjects to attend an informational meeting that was held in their school's media center. During the informational meeting, the researcher and school guidance counselor thoroughly explained the study and answered any questions that the subjects had. The subjects were informed that they had 3 days from the conclusion of the informational meeting to consider their participation in

the study. If subjects decided to participate in the study, they were instructed to report to the guidance counselor's office within 3 days after the meeting to inform her of their decision. Once the subjects informed the guidance counselor of their willingness to participate in the study, she provided them with either a participation letter or consent form. The first 5 subjects from each sample who informed the guidance counselor of their willingness to participate in the study were given consent forms. These subjects participated in an interview session with the researcher in addition to the survey. Upon receiving the consent form, the subjects were asked to read carefully, sign, and submit the consent form to the guidance counselor in order to complete the interview session and survey. The remaining 34 subjects who informed the guidance counselor of their willingness to participate in the study were given a participation letter when they reported to the guidance counselor's office. Upon receipt of the participation letter, subjects were instructed by the guidance counselor to read carefully the contents of the letter as a means to confirm their participation in the study.

If subjects wanted to participate in the study but did not want to attend the informational meeting, the recruitment letter instructed them to report to the guidance counselor's office within 3 days from the day that they received the recruitment letter to inform her of their decision to participate in the study.

Follow-up phone calls to qualified subjects were conducted by the researcher to encourage participation. This process was repeated until 22 subjects who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion and 22 subjects who chose to enroll in college after high school completion agreed to participate in this study.

The researcher obtained permission to conduct research at the rural high school from the rural county school district's Department of Evaluation and Research. Once

approval was obtained, the researcher consulted with the rural high school principal to set a date and time to administer the survey and conduct the interview sessions. The survey and interview sessions were completed on the same day in the rural high school's media center in December 2008. The survey was administered by the researcher with the assistance of the school guidance counselor in a classroomlike setting and took approximately 45 minutes to complete. To maintain anonymity, the participants were instructed by the researcher to leave names off the survey. Once the surveys were completed by the participants, the researcher collected the surveys and analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; Version 16.0). Because the participants did not put their names on the survey, the researcher was unaware of which participant completed which survey.

The participants selected to do an interview with the researcher completed the interview session after they completed the survey. The interview sessions were held in a conference room in the school's media center. The researcher conducted a 15-minute interview with each selected participant on an individual basis. The researcher took field notes to record the participant's comments and responses during each interview. To maintain confidentiality, participant's names were coded by the researcher. Following the completion of the interview sessions, the interview data from the 10 participants were transcribed from the field notes, coded into segments, and then reduced into several common themes.

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 asks, do particular demographic variables predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion? To address Research Question 1, Section I of the SAS contained Likert-type, fill-in, and categorical questions regarding demographic information. The researcher with

the assistance of the school guidance counselor administered the SAS to 22 participants who would not enroll in college after high school and 22 participants who would enroll in college after high school. The surveys were administered in the rural high school media center in December 2008 during the regular school day. The researcher collected all consent forms from the school's guidance counselor prior to the administration of the survey. To maintain anonymity, participants were instructed by the researcher not to put their names on the survey. Once the surveys were completed by the participants, the researcher collected the surveys and analyzed the data using the SPSS (Version 16.0).

The demographic variables on the SAS that were correlated as predictive measures for college enrollment were employment (Question 2), free or reduced-price lunch eligibility (Question 4), household status (Question 11), and presence of a significant male role model (Question 14). As stated before, the generic research design that covers all six research questions is the mixed-methods research design, which means each research question either had a specific quantitative or qualitative research design. For Research Question 1, the specific research design used was a quantitative research design named the predictive correlational design. Burns and Grove (2006) defined a *predictive correlational research design* as a research design that explores causality as a means to describe what factors predict (predictor variables) the occurrence of another variable (the outcome variable). The predictive correlational design was justified for Research Question 1 because the researcher identified the demographic variables in the SAS that were interpreted and used to respond to this quantitative research question.

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 asks, does school preparation predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion? To address Research Question 2, Section II of the SAS contained Likert-type questions

regarding the role of school preparation in the enrollment of African American males in higher education. The researcher administered the survey to 22 participants who would not enroll in college after high school and 22 participants who would enroll in college after high school. The surveys were administered in the rural high school media center in December 2008 during the regular school day. Prior to the administration of the survey, the researcher collected all consent forms from the school's guidance counselor. The researcher also informed all participants of the confidentiality of the survey by instructing them not to put their names on the survey. Once all surveys were completed by the participants, the researcher collected the surveys and analyzed the data using the SPSS (Version 16.0).

The school preparation variables that were correlated as predictive measures for college enrollment evolved from Questions 15-20 on Section II of the SAS. As one of the six designs under the mixed-methods research design, Research Question 2 employed a quantitative research design named the predictive correlational research design as the specific research design to answer the research question. Gay and Airasian (2003) stated that predictive correlational studies use the degree of relationship that exists between two or more variables to predict one variable from the other. Thus, the predictive correlational design was justified for this research question because the researcher identified the school preparation predictor variables in the SAS that were correlated to predict college enrollment.

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 asks, does self-concept predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion? To address Research Question 3, the researcher implemented the same procedure as Research Question 2. Like Research Question 2, the researcher administered the SAS to

22 participants who would not enroll in college after high school and 22 participants who would enroll in college after high school. The surveys were administered in the media center of the rural high school in December 2008 during the regular school day. Prior to the administration of the survey, the researcher collected all consent forms from the school's guidance counselor. The researcher also informed all participants that the survey was confidential and they would not be individually identified on any reports. Section III of the SAS contained questions regarding the impact of self-concept on the enrollment of African American males in higher education. Data obtained from this section were analyzed using the SPSS (Version 16.0).

The self-concept variables that were correlated as predictive measures for college enrollment evolved from Questions 24-40 in Section III of the SAS. The researcher utilized the predictive correlational research design as the specific research design to respond to this quantitative research question. As previously stated, Burns and Grove (2006) defined the predictive correlational research design as a research design that explores causality as a means to describe what factors predict (predictor variables) the occurrence of another variable (the outcome variable). Consequently, the predictive correlational design was justified for Research Question 3 because the researcher identified the self-concept variables in the SAS that were interpreted and correlated as a means to predict college enrollment.

Research Question 4. Research Question 4 asks, does social support predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion? To address Research Question 4, Section IV of the SAS addressed questions regarding the role of social support in the decision making of African American males to either enroll in or not enroll in college after high school completion. The researcher surveyed 22

participants who would not enroll in college after high school and 22 students who would enroll in college after high school. The survey was administered in the rural high school's media center in December 2008 during the regular school day. The researcher obtained all participant consent forms from the school's guidance counselor prior to the administration of the survey. The researcher also notified all participants of the confidentiality of the survey. The researcher collected the surveys as the participants completed them. Upon completion of all surveys, the researcher analyzed the survey data using the SPSS (Version 16.0).

The social support variables that were correlated as predictive measures for college enrollment evolved from Questions 42-50 on the SAS. The researcher utilized the predictive correlational research design as the specific research design to respond to this quantitative research question. The predictive correlational research design explores what predictor variables are thought to predict the occurrence of the outcome variable (Burns & Grove, 2006). Thus, the researcher justified the use of the predictive correlational design for Research Question 4 through the identification of the social support variables that were correlated as a means to predict college enrollment.

Research Question 5. Research Question 5 asks, what noncognitive variables contribute to the low enrollment of African American male high school graduates in higher education? To address Research Question 5, the researcher gathered information from the SAS and student perception interviews. Section V of the SAS contained an open-ended question regarding the identification of factors that would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion. The researcher administered the SAS to 44 participants in December 2008 in the media center of the rural high school during the regular school day. To maintain confidentiality, participants

were instructed not to put their names on the survey. Upon completion, the researcher gathered all surveys and analyzed the data using the SPSS (Version 16.0).

After the administration of the SAS, five previously identified participants from each research sample (i.e., enrolling in college and not enrolling in college) were interviewed in the media-center conference room. The researcher collected all consent forms from the school's guidance counselor prior to the interview sessions. The participants were interviewed about their current home or family structure, influences, the importance of education, problems they have encountered, levels of school support, and quality of their high school education. The interview sessions lasted approximately 15 minutes per participant. The researcher took field notes for each interview session. Participants were assured by the researcher that their identities were confidential. They were also assured that they would never be individually identified in any report of the data. Moreover, the researcher offered all participants a copy of the research findings. Once all of the data were transcribed, the researcher processed the data into segments and then coded and reduced the data into several common themes as a means to answer the research question.

Participant responses from Question 51 on the SAS and Questions 1-6 of the Student Perception Interview protocol were descriptively presented as a means to identify the noncognitive variables that hinder African American males from enrolling in college after high school completion. The researcher employed a qualitative research design named the descriptive research design as the specific research design to answer this qualitative research question. As one of the six designs under the mixed-methods research design, Research Question 5 employed a qualitative research design named the descriptive research design as the specific research design to answer the research

question. Gay and Airasian (2003) defined a descriptive design as a research design that determines and reports the possible causes of a phenomenon through the collection of data and answers to questions that concern the current subject of the study. The descriptive research design was justified for Research Question 5 because the researcher identified the question in the SAS (Question 51) and six questions in the Student Perception Interview protocol that were descriptively presented as a means to identify the noncognitive variables that serve as salient reasons why African American males do not enroll in college after high school.

Research Question 6. Research Question 6 asks, what factors would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion? To address Research Question 5, the researcher gathered information from the SAS and the Student Perception Interview protocol. Section V of the SAS contained an open-ended question regarding the identification of factors that would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion. The researcher administered the SAS to 44 participants in December 2008 in the media center of the rural high school during the regular school day. To maintain confidentiality, participants were instructed not to put their names on the survey. Upon completion, the researcher gathered all surveys and analyzed the data using the SPSS (Version 16.0).

After the administration of the SAS, five previously identified participants from each research sample were interviewed in the media-center conference room. The participants were interviewed about personal needs and what forms of support could influence African American males to enroll in college after high school completion. The researcher took field notes for each interview. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher informed all participants that their identities would not be revealed in any report of the

data. Following the completion of the interview sessions, the researcher transcribed the data obtained from the field notes. Once all of the data were transcribed, the researcher processed the data into segments and then coded and reduced the data into several common themes as a means to answer the research question.

Participant responses from Question 53 on the SAS and Question 7 on the Student Perception Interview protocol were descriptively presented as a means to identify the factors that would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion. The researcher employed a qualitative research design named the descriptive research design as the specific research design to answer this qualitative research question. The descriptive research design is one of the six designs under the mixed-methods research design. According to Burns and Grove (2006), the descriptive research design explores aspects of phenomena of interest. Its purpose is to determine systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest factually and accurately (Isaac & Michael, 1995). Thus, due to the researcher's interest in factors that would increase the college enrollment of African American males, the descriptive research design was justified for Research Question 6 because the researcher identified Question 53 on the SAS and Question 7 on the Student Perception Interview protocol that were descriptively presented as a means to identify the factors that would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion.

Null Hypotheses

Research Questions 1-4 were made into hypotheses. Thus, the four null hypotheses addressed in this study were as follows:

1. Particular demographic variables do not predict whether African American

males will enroll in college after high school completion.

2. School preparation does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion.

3. Self-concept does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion.

4. Social support does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion.

Data Analysis

SPSS (Version 16.0) was used to complete the data analysis. Statistical analyses included frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, and means for demographic data, survey responses, and interview responses. Logistic regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses that examine relationships among the variables of college enrollment, demographic characteristics, school preparation, self-concept, and social support. Thus, the alpha level of .05 was used for the latter statistical test.

To examine Research Question 1, the quantitative data were compiled and analyzed according to a logistic regression model utilizing the statistical analysis of the SPSS (Version 16.0). Thus, a logistic regression was conducted with the four demographic variables as the predictors and whether the participants will enroll in college (yes or no) as the outcome variable. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2006), logistic regression is the appropriate analysis to implement when a set of predictors is used to predict a dichotomous outcome (enrolling in college--yes or no). The four predictors are questions from the SAS: Question 2 (employed--yes or no), Question 4 (eligible for free or reduced-price lunch--yes or no), Question 11 (live in a two-parent home--yes or no), and Question 14 (have significant male role model--yes or no). Thus, the outcome

variable (Question 9) was a categorical variable. Moreover, the alpha level of .05 was used to test for the significance of the four demographic variables (employment, free or reduced-price lunch, two-parent home, and present male role model) in predicting college enrollment.

To examine Research Question 2, the quantitative data were compiled and analyzed according to a logistic regression model utilizing the statistical analysis of the SPSS (Version 16.0). A logistic regression was conducted with the sum of yes responses to Questions 15-20 (school preparation) as the predictor variable and whether the participants would enroll in college (yes or no) as the outcome variable. As previously stated, logistic regression is the appropriate analysis for use when a set of predictors is used to predict a dichotomous outcome (i.e., enrolling in college--yes or no; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). Consequently, the outcome variable (Question 9) was a categorical variable. Further, the alpha level of .05 was used to assess if the responses to school preparation items (Questions 15-20) predicts enrollment in college.

To examine Research Question 3, the quantitative data were compiled and analyzed according to a logistic regression model utilizing the statistical analysis of the SPSS (Version 16.0). A logistic regression was conducted with the average 17 self-concept questions on the SAS (Questions 24-40) as the predictor variable and whether the participants would enroll in college (yes or no) as the outcome variable. Again, logistic regression was the appropriate analysis to use when a predictor is used to predict a dichotomous outcome (i.e., enrolling in college--yes or no; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). The outcome variable (Question 9) was a categorical variable. Further, enrolling in college based upon self-concept was measured using the significance level of .05.

To examine Research Question 4, the quantitative data were compiled and

analyzed according to a logistic regression model utilizing the statistical analysis of the SPSS (Version 16.0). Thus, a logistic regression was conducted with two average scores (composites of Questions 41a-i and 42-50) as predictors and whether the participants will enroll in college (yes or no) as the outcome variable. Thus, logistic regression was the appropriate analysis for Research Question 4. Tabachnick and Fidell (2006) contended that logistic regression is best for utilization when a set of predictors is used to predict a dichotomous outcome (i.e., enrolling in college--yes or no). The outcome variable (Question 9) was a categorical variable. Thus, a .05 alpha level was chosen as the critical value for this statistical test.

To examine Research Question 5, open-ended questions regarding the noncognitive variables that contribute to the low enrollment of African American male high school graduates in higher education were excerpted from the SAS and Student Perception Interview protocol and descriptively presented. The text data obtained from the survey's open-ended responses and interview responses were transcribed to give an overall flavor of the participants' perspectives. A coding procedure described by Creswell (2005) was used to process the data into segments. The segments were then coded and reduced into several common themes. This process distinguished meaningful text from unimportant information and differentiated between similar and dissimilar responses among participants who would not enroll in college after high school and participants who would enroll in college after high school.

In order to analyze interview responses quantitatively, some responses received numeric counts. As referenced by Creswell and Clark (2007), several approaches are useful in quantifying data, including (a) frequency of themes, (b) the percentage of themes, (c) the percentage of respondents endorsing multiple themes, and (d) proximity

of one theme to another. Thus, the latter strategies were employed by the researcher to draw conclusions from the data.

To examine Research Question 6, open-ended questions regarding the factors that would influence the enrollment of African American male high school graduates in higher education were excerpted from the SAS and the Student Perception Interview protocol and descriptively presented. The survey's open-ended responses along with the interview responses were transcribed, coded, and then simplified into common themes. In comparison to Research Question 5, this process distinguished meaningful text from unimportant information and differentiated between similar and dissimilar responses among participants who would not enroll in college after high school and participants who would enroll in college after high school. According to Creswell (1998), when applying coding techniques to qualitative data, the researcher compiles information into categories, identifies a central idea, and develops a story that incorporates each category. Further, as a means to present the factors that would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion, the researcher analyzed participant responses by grouping the responses into common themes and using qualitative methods (i.e., frequencies, percentages, etc.).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology employed in the study, including the population studied, instruments utilized in the study, data-collection procedures, null hypotheses, and data analysis. As a mixed-methods study, this research was done using an explanatory design, which primarily weighed the quantitative data over the qualitative data. The goal was to identify the noncognitive variables that impacted the enrollment of African American males in higher education after high school

completion. The results obtained from using these methods, findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations, respectively, are presented in chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter describes the outcomes used to answer the six research questions posed in this study. The results are organized by research question. Student surveys administered to 44 African American male high school seniors and structured interviews conducted with 10 of them provided data to answer the research questions in this study. The participants were 22 African American male high school seniors who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion and 22 African American male high school seniors who chose to enroll in college after high school completion. Each participant was administered the SAS. However, only 5 participants from each group completed an interview session with the researcher. The researcher decided to employ a mixed-methods design (i.e., quantitative and qualitative questions) in order to obtain more data from the participants and identify the noncognitive variables better that hinder or prevent African American males from enrolling in college after high school completion.

The administration of the SAS obtained demographic data of each participant. It was pertinent that the researcher garner information on the participants' backgrounds and perceptions in order to assess the noncognitive variables effectively that deter the college enrollment of African American males who are academically capable of enrolling in college upon graduating from high school. The demographic questions in the survey provided information on the backgrounds of the two groups of participants in 11 major areas: (a) age, (b) employment, (c) socioeconomic status, (d) GPA, (e) high school academic track, (f) college entrance exam, (g) their quality of education, (h) family structure, (i) family education level, (j) presence of a male role model, and (k) indicated barriers to enrollment.

Demographic Background of the Participants

Eleven demographic components were examined as a means to understand the backgrounds of each participant. A detailed description of each demographic component is explained below.

Age. Participants in this study varied from age 18 to 19. The mean response for age among the two samples was 18.25 ($SD = 0.43$). Of the 22 participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion, the mean response age was 18.32 ($SD = 0.48$). Seven (31.8%) of the participants in this group indicated they were 19 years of age, and 15 (68.1%) indicated they were 18 years of age. As for the 22 participants who chose to enroll in college after high school completion, the mean response for age was 18.18 ($SD = 0.39$). Four (18.1%) of the participants indicated they were 19 years of age, and 18 (81.1%) indicated they were 18 years of age. Thus, significant differences existed among the two groups on the variable of age. The participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion were noticeably older than the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school completion.

Employment. In terms of employment, 36 (81.8%) of the participants were not employed, and 8 (18.2%) were. Of the 22 participants who chose not to enroll in college after completing high school, 18 (81.1%) were not employed, and 4 (18.2%) were employed. In regard to the 4 (18.2%) who indicated employment, 3 (75.0%) worked 31 to 40 hours per week. As for the 22 participants who chose to enroll in college after completing high school, 18 (81.8%) were not employed, and 4 (18.2%) were employed. Moreover, for those 4 (18.2%) participants who indicated employment, 3 (75.0%) specified that they worked 11 to 20 hours per week. Thus, in contrasting both groups, there were more non-college-enrolling participants than college-enrolling participants

who worked 31 to 40 hours per week and more college-enrolling participants than non-college-enrolling participants who worked 11 to 20 hours per week. The latter implies that the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school worked more than the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school. Table 4 displays frequencies and percentages for the range of hours worked per week per group.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages for the Range of Hours Worked per Week

No. of hours	Not enrolling in college		Enrolling in college	
	No.	%	No.	%
1-10	1	4.5	1	4.5
11-20	0	0.0	3	13.6
31-40	3	13.6	22	100.0

Socioeconomic status. Eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch was used to assess the socioeconomic status of the 44 participants. Low income was the primary qualification for free or reduced-price lunch eligibility. Therefore, eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch indicates that participants reside in a low-income family. Of the total 44 participants, 32 (72.7%) were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 12 (27.3%) were not eligible. As for the group of participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school, 17 (77.3%) were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 5 (22.7%) were not eligible. Moreover, 15 (68.2%) of participants who chose to enroll in college after high school were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 7 (31.8%) were not. Furthermore, 4.6% or more of the participants who chose not to enroll in college after

high school were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

GPA. The overall mean response for GPA between the two groups of participants was 3.00 ($SD = 0$). Separately, the GPA mean response for the participants who chose not to enroll in college was 2.37 ($SD = 0.41$). Of this group, the highest GPA was 3.14, and the minimum was 1.80. In terms of the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school, the overall GPA mean response was 2.64 ($SD = 0.52$). The highest GPA was 3.90, and the minimum was 2.00. Although the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school completion had the highest GPA mean, 50% of the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion had a GPA of B. Therefore, no significant difference existed between the two groups regarding GPA. Table 5 presents frequencies and percentages for the numeric and corresponding letter GPA of both groups.

Table 5

Grade Point Averages of the Participants

GPA value	Grade	Not enrolling in college		Enrolling in college	
		No.	%	No.	%
3.50-4.00	A	0	0.0	2	9.0
2.50-3.49	B	11	50.0	14	63.6
1.50-2.49	C	7	31.8	6	27.2
1.00-1.49	D	4	18.1	0	0.0
0.00	F	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. GPA = grade point average.

High school academic track. In looking at the type of academic track or course of study that all 44 participants followed in high school, 26 (59.1%) indicated that they were following the general academic track or course of study in school. For the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion, 15 (68.2%) indicated that they were following the general course of study, and 3 (13.6%) indicated that they were following the college-prep course of study. In regard to the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school, 11 (50.0%) reported that they were following the general course of study, and 10 (45.5%) reported that they were following the college-prep course of study. As for the vocational academic track or course of study, 4 (18.2%) of the participants who were not going to enroll in college followed this course of study as opposed to 1 (4.5%) of the participants who was going to enroll in college. Overall, the survey revealed that, between the two groups, more participants who chose to enroll in college after high school followed the college-prep academic track or course of study than the participants who chose not to enroll. Table 6 displays the frequencies and percentages of the academic track followed between both groups of participants.

Table 6

High School Academic Track

Academic track	Not enrolling in college		Enrolling in college	
	No.	%	No.	%
College preparation	3	13.6	10	45.5
General	15	68.2	11	50.0
Vocational	4	18.2	1	4.5

College entrance exam. Indication of whether a participant took a college entrance exam was assessed as a possible indicator that may have deterred several participants from choosing to enroll in college after completing high school. Of the 44 participants surveyed, 28 (63.6%) indicated that they took at least one of two college entrance exams, and 16 (36.4%) reported that they had not taken any of the two college entrance exams. As per group, 11 (50.0%) of the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school took a college entrance exam, and 11 (50.0%) did not. Thus, of the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school, 17 (77.3%) of them took a college entrance exam, and 5 (22.7%) did not. Further, the participants who chose to enroll took 27.3% more college entrance exams than the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school.

Quality of education. The response to this survey question enabled all participants to indicate their perception of the quality of education that they had received from high school. Given the choices of *excellent*, *good*, *fair*, and *poor*, the majority of participants (28 or 72.7%) indicated that their quality of education was *good*. In regard to the two separate groups, most of the participants (12 or 54.5%) who chose not to enroll in college perceived their quality of education as *good*. However, 10 (45.5%) perceived their quality of education as *fair*. As for the participants who were enrolling in college, 16 (72.7%) recognized their quality of education as *good*, 5 (22.7%) indicated it was *fair*, and 1 (4.5%) indicated it was *excellent*. As summarized in Table 7, more participants who chose to enroll in college after high school had a positive perception regarding their quality of education received from high school.

Family structure. Living in a two-parent home was another important question asked on the survey. Out of the 44 participants who were surveyed, it was reported that

18 (40.9%) lived in a two-parent home and 26 (59.1%) did not. Of those participants who did not live in a two-parent home, 19 (95.0%) indicated they lived with their mother, 1 (5.0%) lived with his father, and 5 (11.3%) indicated that they lived with extended family (i.e., aunt, grandmother, and grandfather).

Table 7

Quality of Education Received

Quality	Not enrolling in college		Enrolling in college	
	No.	%	No.	%
Excellent	0	0.0	1	4.5
Good	12	54.5	16	72.7
Fair	10	45.5	5	22.7
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0

Among the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school, 6 (27.3%) lived in a two-parent home, and 16 (72.7%) did not. Thus, of the 16 (27.3%) participants who did not live in a two-parent home, 10 (62.5%) revealed that they lived with the mother, 1 (6.2%) lived with his father, and 4 (25.0%) lived with extended family. In terms of the participants who chose to enroll in college, 12 (54.5%) lived in a two-parent home, and 10 (45.5%) did not. For those who indicated that they did live in a two-parent home, only 9 (90.0%) responded as to which parent with whom they lived. All 9 (90.0%) indicated that they lived with their mother. Significant differences existed between the two groups in regard to participants who lived in a two-parent home. The data indicated that 27.2% more of the participants who chose to enroll in college after

high school lived in a two-parent home.

Family education level. Educational attainments of family members play a big role in college decision making. On the survey, the indication of family education levels was separated by family member. Mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, uncle, aunt, and cousins were the main categories of family members presented in the survey question. No significant differences existed between the two groups regarding the number of family members who attended or graduated from college. Table 8 displays the frequencies and percentages of family members who attended or graduated from college between the two groups.

Table 8

College Attendance or Completion of Family Members

Family member	Not enrolling in college		Enrolling in college	
	No.	%	No.	%
Mother	6	27.3	6	27.3
Father	4	18.2	7	31.8
Sister or sisters	2	9.1	6	27.3
Brother or brothers	5	22.7	4	18.2
Grandmother	2	9.0	2	9.1
Grandfather	2	9.0	0	0.0
Uncle or uncles	12	54.5	6	27.3
Aunt or aunts	14	63.6	13	59.1
Cousin or cousins	10	45.5	15	68.2

Significant male role model. The final demographic indicator on the survey asked participants to indicate whether they had a significant male role model in their life. Of the 44 participants who were surveyed, 12 (27.2%) did not have a significant male role model in their life, and 20 (45.4%) did. There were 20 (45.4%) participants who responded yes they chose to enroll in college after completing high school. Only 2 (9.1%) participants from this group responded no to having a significant male role model in their life. As for the other group of participants who were not enrolling in college, 12 (27.2%) acknowledged that they had an important male role model in their life, and 10 (45.5%) acknowledged that they did not. Overall, the data revealed that more college-enrolling participants had a significant male role model in their life than non-college-enrolling participants.

Barriers to college enrollment. The participants who chose not to enroll in college cited various reasons for not choosing to enroll in college after high school (see Table 9). The survey provided a question regarding the barriers to college enrollment. Only the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school were asked to respond to this question. The survey question provided the latter participants with a listing of eight reasons for not enrolling in college. Specifically, the participants were asked to identify as many reasons that were applicable to their situation. The largest number of participants (13 or 59.0%) indicated the lack of finances as the most prominent barrier that hindered their choice to enroll in college after high school. The second-largest percentage of participants (7 or 31.8%) reported entering the military and taking a good job as essential barriers to their enrollment in college. Thus, both barriers were noted as counteractions to the lack of affordability barrier.

Analysis of the Null Hypotheses

A major portion of this study was designed to examine possible correlations between college enrollment and four particular demographic variables (i.e., employment, socioeconomic status, family structure, and presence of a male role model), college enrollment and school preparation, college enrollment and self-concept, and college enrollment and social support. Using available survey data on participants' objectives and perceptions of college enrollment, four hypotheses were made from the first 4 research questions and were tested.

Table 9

Non-College-Enrolling Participants' Barriers to College

Barriers	No.	%
To accept a good job	7	31.8
To enter the military	7	31.8
Lack of finances	13	59.1
Marriage	1	4.5
Disinterest	3	13.6
Lack of academic ability	4	18.2
Insufficient skills	2	9.1
Have a baby on the way	2	9.1

Findings for Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 stated, particular demographic variables do not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. To examine Hypothesis 1, a logistic regression was conducted to assess if

employment (yes or no), socioeconomic status (yes or no), live in a two-parent home (yes or no) and male role model in life (yes or no) predicts college enrollment (yes or no). The results of the regression were found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 9.60, p < .05$. The independent variables accounted for 19.6% of the variance in choosing to enroll in college. Overall, the model correctly predicted 68.2% of college-enrollment outcomes.

The null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level and was found to be significant. As a result of the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that, as participants tended to have a male role model in their life, they were 7.81 times more likely to enroll in college after high school completion. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between the male role model independent variable and outcome variable (college enrollment). Participants who had a significant male role model in their life were more likely to enroll in college after completing high school. The results of the regression are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Logistic Regression for Employment, Socioeconomic Status, Two-Parent Home, and Male Role Model in Life Predicting College Enrollment

Independent variables	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Employment	-0.03	0.89	0.00	.97	0.97
Socioeconomic status	-0.55	0.84	0.43	.51	0.58
Two-parent home	0.62	0.73	4.71	.40	1.86
Male role model in life	2.06	0.92	4.98	.03	7.81
Constant	-2.77	2.44	1.29	.26	0.06

Note. B = beta coefficient; Wald = coefficient for each individual predictor variable; Exp(B) = exponential beta; $\chi^2(4) = 9.60, p = .045, r^2 = .196$.

Findings for Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 stated, school preparation does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. To examine Hypothesis 2, a logistic regression was conducted to assess if school preparation predicts college enrollment (yes or no). The results of the regression were statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 8.72, p < .01$. The independent variable accounted for 20.4% of the variance in college enrollment. Overall, the model correctly predicted 65.9% of college enrollment outcomes. The results of the regression are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Logistic Regression for School Preparation Predicting Planning for a College Degree

Independent variables	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
School preparation	1.32	0.52	6.38	.01	3.74
Constant	-8.77	3.45	6.45	.01	0.00

Note. B = beta coefficient; Wald = coefficient for each individual predictor variable; Exp(B) = exponential beta; $\chi^2(1) = 8.72, p = .003, r^2 = .204$.

The null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level and was found to be significant. As a result of the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that, for every one unit increase in school preparation, participants were 3.74 times more likely to enroll in college after high school completion. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between the two variables. Participants who were provided school preparation (i.e., instruction on the college admissions and financial-aid process, information on colleges and requirements, and assistance with properly completing necessary forms for

enrollment) were more likely to enroll in college after completing high school.

Findings for Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 stated, self-concept does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. To examine Hypothesis 3, a logistic regression was conducted to assess if self-concept predicts college enrollment (yes or no). The findings from this analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between self-concept and college enrollment, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.913, p = .167$. The independent variables accounted for 5.7% of the variance in college enrollment. Overall, the model correctly predicted 56.8% of college enrollment outcomes.

The null hypothesis was tested at the 0.5 level, which was found to be greater than .05; thus not statistically significant ($p = .167$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Consequently, self-concept did not predict whether a participant would enroll in college after high school completion. The results of the regression are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Logistic Regression for Self-Concept Predicting Planning for a College Degree

Independent variable	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Self-concept	1.66	1.24	1.79	.18	5.28
Constant	-4.53	3.39	1.78	.18	0.01

Note. B = beta coefficient; Wald = coefficient for each individual predictor variable; Exp(B) = exponential beta; $\chi^2 (1) = 1.913, p = .167, r^2 = .057$.

Findings for Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 stated, social support does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. To

examine Hypothesis 4, a logistic regression was conducted to assess if social support predicts college enrollment (yes or no). The findings from this analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between social support and college enrollment, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.00, p = .960$. The independent variables accounted for 0.0% of the variance in choosing to enroll in college after completing high school. Overall, the model correctly predicted 52.3% of college enrollment outcomes.

The null hypothesis was tested at the 0.5 level, which was found to be greater than .05, thus not statistically significant ($p = .338$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Consequently, social support did not predict whether a participant would enroll in college after high school completion. The results of the regression are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13

Logistic Regression for Indicators Predicting Planning for a College Degree

Independent variable	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Social support	-0.02	0.45	0.00	.960	0.98
Constant	0.10	2.11	0.00	.960	1.11

Note. B = beta coefficient; Wald = coefficient for each individual predictor variable; Exp(B) = exponential beta; $\chi^2 (2) = 2.17, p = .338, r^2 = .304$.

Summary of the Hypotheses Findings

A detailed summary of the findings for Hypotheses 1-4 are illustrated in this section. The results of each hypothesis are individually discussed.

Hypothesis 1. There was a statistically significant relationship between a significant male role model and college enrollment ($p = .045$). The null hypothesis was

rejected.

Hypothesis 2. There was a statistically significant relationship between school preparation and college enrollment ($p = .003$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 3. There was no statistically significant relationship between self-concept and college enrollment. The null hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis 4. There was no statistically significant relationship between social support and college enrollment. The null hypothesis was retained.

Findings for Research Questions 1-4

Research Questions 1-4 were hypothesized. Each was rewritten as a null hypothesis as a means to test statistically for the existence of a significant relationship between college enrollment and four particular demographic variables (i.e., employment, socioeconomic status, family structure, and presence of a male role model); between college enrollment and school preparation; between college enrollment and self-concept; and between college enrollment and social support. The findings for these analyses were presented in the section entitled *Analysis of the Null Hypotheses*.

Findings for Research Question 5

Research Question 5 asked, what noncognitive variables contribute to the low enrollment of African American male high school graduates in higher education? The data source for Research Question 5 was collected from the SAS and the student perception interviews. Participant responses from Question 51 of the SAS and Questions 1-6 of the Student Perception Interview protocol were broken down into segments, coded, and then reduced into several common themes. The findings were presented using qualitative methods (i.e., frequencies and percentages).

Data were collected from one question on the SAS as a means to answer Research

Question 5. Question 51 on the SAS asked, “Please state the reason or reasons for your decision to enroll or not enroll in college.” To answer this question, data were collected from 44 African American male high school seniors. Of this group, 22 chose not to enroll in college after completing high school, and 22 chose to enroll in college after high school completion. An examination of the data revealed three themes as prominent reasons for not enrolling in college and enrolling in college. The most common themes that evolved from the data for the reasons for nonenrollment were (a) lack of finances, (b) enlistment in the military, and (c) lack of self-confidence. Because these responses had the largest frequencies, they can be identified as noncognitive variables that contributed to the low enrollment of African American males in higher education. The most common themes identified as the major rationales for college enrollment among the participants in regard to reasons for enrollment were (a) seeking long-term income, (b) self-enhancement, and (c) greater opportunities.

Frequencies are presented in Table 14 as a means to exemplify the underlying reasons for why large masses of African American males are choosing not to enroll in college as opposed to the small segment of African American males who choose to enroll in college. Of the 22 non-college-enrolling participants who responded to this question, 7 (31.8%) stated lack of finances as a major issue that prevented them from choosing to enroll in college after completing high school. Four (18.1%) participants indicated enlistment in the military, and 4 (18.1%) indicated lack of self-confidence as additional causes of nonenrollment as well.

The data obtained from Questions 1-6 of the Student Perception Interview protocol were the second source of data used to answer Research Question 5. As a means of collecting the data, 10 participants were randomly selected to participate in an

interview session with the researcher. Of the 10 participants, 5 chose to enroll in college after high school completion, and 5 chose not to enroll in college after high school completion.

Table 14

Participants' Reasons to Enroll (n = 22) and Not Enroll in College (n = 22)

Reason not to enroll	No.	Reason to enroll	No.
Tired of school	1	Seek long-term income	12
Not ready or lack of self-confidence	4	Make family happy	1
Enlistment in the military	4	Greater opportunity	4
Fear of failure	1	Better self	6
No interest	1	More knowledge	1
Lack of finances	7	Meet others	1
Grades	1	Play sports	1
Not necessary	1		
Seek immediate income	2		

Each participant was asked six questions from the interview protocol that pertained to the discovery of noncognitive variables that hindered the college enrollment of African American males. The six interview questions that were asked are as follows:

1. "How would you describe your current life situation?"
2. "What influenced your decision not to attend college after high school completion?"

3. “How important is education to you? What importance does your family place on education? ”

4. “What problems or challenges do you encounter as an African American male high school student? ”

5. “How would you describe the level of support available to you from teachers and staff? ”

6. “How would you describe the quality of education you received from high school? ”

The participants’ individual interview responses are detailed below. The responses are presented by interview question. The names of the interview participants were coded to protect their identity. The coded names of the five interview participants who chose not to enroll in college are Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the coded names of the five interview participants who chose to enroll in college are Respondents 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, respectively.

Interview Question 1. Interview Question 1 asked, “how would you describe your current life situation?” Of the 10 participants who were interviewed, 7 (70.0%) indicated that their life was a little abnormal. All of them stated that they lived outside of a two-parent home. Of the 7 (70.0%) participants who said they did not live in a two-parent home, 3 (42.8%) noted that they lived with extended family members.

Respondent 1 stated that his life was pretty different from most. He said, “I live with my aunt, uncle, and two cousins because I could not decide which one of my parents that I wanted to live with.” He added that his father lives in a different state that he does not want to move to and his mom lives in an unsafe area in which he did not want to live. He said, “my mom wanted me to move with her but I didn’t want to move to the projects.

I wanted to live in a better community so instead I just moved with my aunt.”

Respondent 2 stated that his life was not the average life that most people live. He cited his home environment as pretty unusual but doable given the circumstances that caused it. He said,

I live with grandmother. She is the only parent figure that I've ever had. My mom gave me up at birth and my dad never came around. With grandmother's only means of money being her Social Security check, I was forced to work at an early age. The little money that I do make is used to help pay bills around the house. I just hate seeing my grandmother worry herself about money.

Respondent 3 considered his life to be uncommon as well. He said,

My younger siblings and I all live with my aunt who is a single parent with six kids of her own. I do a lot of baby-sitting by looking after my younger siblings and cousins while my aunt works two full-time jobs to support all of us. Money is hard to come by in our house because of the all the mouths to feed. My aunt is always stressed about it.

Respondent 4 had a life that is becoming more common everyday. He said,

I live with my mother, my little brother, and my little sister. My dad passed away when I was 2 years old. I never really got a chance to know him. Since his death, my mother never got remarried or had a serious boyfriend, which left me never having a positive male figure in my life.

Respondent 5 stated that his life makes him feel as if he is already a parent because of the constant supervision that he has to provide to his siblings without any help from a father figure. He said,

I live with my mom who is a single parent. In our house, it is mostly my job to watch my siblings so that my mom can work her 12-hour shift job. None of my sibling's fathers are involved in their life, and my mom has to pick up the slack. I have somewhat of a relationship with my father, but he still barely comes around. Money is always an issue in my house. There have been plenty of times where my mom is up late at night worrying about how she is going to feed us.

Respondent 6 said that he lives with only his mom and his little sister. He added that, despite not having a father in the house, his mom “is my mom and my dad and she makes life feel pretty normal.”

Respondent 7 said, “I have what I consider to be a normal life for a young African American male teenager. I live in a one-parent home with my mother and two little brothers. My mom basically just works to get by.”

Respondent 8 believed that his life situation was great. He said, “I live in a two-parent home with parents who care about my future. I am the only child and get a lot of my parent’s attention because of it.”

Respondent 9 stated that he had no complaints regarding his life. He noted his life as being pretty normal and somewhat great compared to this classmates. He said, “I have both of my parents in the house. They work a lot in order to be able to provide for me. I don’t see them a whole lot, but they still inspire me to be great.”

Respondent 10 said,

I live with both of my parents in the house. I’m the only child, and I am home by myself a lot. I got me a part-time job at McDonald’s after school to kill the time until my parents get home from work.

Interview Question 2. Interview Question 2 asked, “what influenced your decision to enroll or not enroll in college after high school completion?” Of the 5 interview participants who chose not to enroll in college, 3 (60%) stated that enlisting in the military was a better option for them, and 2 (40%) cited lack of finances as a deterrent. For the 5 interview participants who chose to enroll in college, 4 (80%) indicated that their want for a better life influenced them to enroll in college, and 2 (40%) said that seeing their parents struggle pushed them to want more out of life, which influenced them to enroll in college after completing high school. All 10 of the participants’ individual interview responses are detailed below.

Respondent 1 stated that he felt as if he was not ready for college and the military would be a better option for him. He said, “I want to join the military because I feel that I

am not ready for college. I would be more helpful serving my country in the armed forces instead.”

Respondent 2 said, “I always thought that the military was better for me. I will better myself by enlisting in the military; I feel that I need discipline and structure in my life and college can’t give me that.”

Respondent 3 stated that his intentions on school beyond high school were not all that high because he wants to gain experience in flying planes and earning a consistent check at the same time. He noted that college was not an option because it would not allow for both the experience and money at the same time. He said,

I want to go to the Air Force for the experience and learn how to fly planes. I’m not all that interested in going to college because it won’t allow me to do what I want to do with my life.

Respondent 4 said,

My family doesn’t have money for me to go to college. We are poor, and I wouldn’t want my momma to spend any penny on college when she can use it to feed my little sisters. I just can’t see myself doing that. I didn’t get a scholarship or any other type of financial help so I just won’t go. Basically, I just want to get a job so that I can have money to help my family.

Respondent 5 responded to the question in the same way as Respondent 4. He stated, “my family doesn’t have the money to send me to college so I decided that I am going to work to help my mom and my siblings live better.”

Respondent 6 indicated that he was influenced to enroll in college simply off of personal want. He said, “I want to pretty much make something out of myself in the future, and I know that the only way I can do that is if I have a college education.”

Respondent 7 stated that he was influenced to enroll in college from seeing his mom struggle to support him. He also indicated that his participation in the Upward Bound program was helpful too. He said,

I see how my mom struggles, and I would do anything that I can to help her do better, and I think that going to college would help me to help her. The staff members in the Upward Bound program motivate me to want to go to college too.

Respondent 8 stated that he knew he would enroll in college because he wanted to make something out of himself and have a better life. He said, “I always wanted a better life and to make something out of myself. To me, college was not an option. It was mandatory.”

Respondent 9 said,

I want to make a better life for myself than what my parents had. My parents didn't have the opportunity to go to college and they struggled pretty much of their life because of it. I hate having to see my parents suffer, and I knew that I didn't want my children to see me in the same way. I know that college is the biggest chance that I have to be more successful than my parents.

Respondent 10 indicated that he wanted to pursue better things beyond the normal things his family had. He said, “I want to pursue the better things that life has to offer, and sitting at home will not cut it.”

Interview Question 3. Interview Question 3 asked, “how important is education to you? What importance does your family place on education?” Of the participants who were interviewed, 5 (50%) responded that education was very important, and 5 (50%) stated that their families really pushed education. Of the 5 interview participants who chose not to enroll in college, 3 (60%) indicated that education was not important to their families, and 2 (40%) replied that conversations regarding college did not come up in their families. The participants' individual interview responses are below.

Respondent 1 stated that “education is somewhat important to me. My family doesn't talk about college so I don't feel all that eager to go.”

Respondent 2 said,

Education is a little important to me. My family doesn't place that much

importance on education. They talk about education sometimes but not that much. Nobody in my family ever asked me what I planned to do after high school or asked me about college.

Respondent 3 stated that education was not all that important to him. He indicated that education was not for everyone and that it is not all what people make it out to be. As far as his family, Respondent 3 stated that his mom did not talk about college. She only talked about her not wanting him to join the Air Force.

Respondent 4 said,

Education is not all that important to me. If you are a hard worker you should be able to make it without a college degree. To my family education is not important because they believe that education can't teach you how to be a hard worker, only working can.

Respondent 5 responded that education was somewhat of importance to most people, but it is not for everybody. He said, "Education is alright, but it's not for everybody. Nobody in my family talks about education. It's really not talked about at all in my family."

Respondent 6 said, "Education is very important to me. I feel that, without education, you really don't have anything. My mom she is really influencing me at the moment to attend college."

Respondent 7 indicated education as being a very important aspect in his life. He stated that he was taught early in his life that education was the number one priority. He said,

I was taught when I was growing up that education is the number one priority in life. That's the way my momma raised me. My family stresses education a lot because my momma didn't go to college, and she and my grandma want me to go ahead and go to college so that I can do better and have a better life than they have.

Respondent 8 said,

I see education as being very important. I feel that you need a higher education to make it in the world today. My parents weren't college graduates so they push me just as hard to attend college so that I can be and do better than them.

Respondent 9 cited education as a ticket to having a comfortable and satisfying life. He noted the influence of his parents as being the main cause for his belief. He said, "My parents push education on me all the time. Everyday I come home from school my father always gives me a lecture telling me to do right and to keep my head in the books."

Respondent 10 stated, "Education is very important to me and my parents. My mom is attending college now for her master's degree. My dad never went to college so he is pushing me to be better than him."

Interview Question 4. Interview Question 4 asked, "what problems or challenges do you encounter as an African American male high school student?" Of the 5 interview participants who chose not to enroll in college, 5 (50%) indicated negative assumptions that people make about their appearance as the most common problems or challenges that they encounter, and 2 (40%) cited peer pressure regarding drugs and violence as problems that they faced. Of the 5 interview participants who chose to enroll in college after high school completion, 4 (80%) cited combating attitudes and negative stereotypes as major challenges for them, and 1 (20%) indicated that he did not encounter any problems. The participants' individual interview responses are detailed below.

Respondent 1 stated he experienced problems with people assuming that he was in a gang and sold drugs. He said, because of how he looks, most people do not expect anything but the worst from him. He added,

Because I have dreadlocks, most people think that I am a thug. Because of this, people won't give me a chance. It's very hard for me to get a job or get help with anything because of what they think I am.

Respondent 2 said,

My gender and race gives me two strikes. Most of the time, I feel as if I'm being discriminated on when I'm just walking around or in a store or something. People are always watching me with a negative look.

Respondent 3 stated that, in his community, it is easy to get caught up in selling drugs as a young African American male. He noted that he is approached constantly by gang members to join their gang and sell drugs. He said,

Drug dealers are always out there looking for more employees to work for them. The major drug dealer in my neck of the woods tries to win me over with clothes, sneakers, and cash to work for him. I have been strong enough to not give in to that.

Respondent 4 said,

Being me, a Black male with hair on my head, I get judged wrongly a lot because of how I look. A lot of people outside of my race think that African American males can't do nothing but walk around and deal drugs.

Respondent 5 stated that he encountered negative assumptions regarding the color of his skin. He said,

I get criticized about my skin color and the way that I look. When I walk in stores, people keep a close eye on me because they think that I am a thug and they think I'm going to steal something out of the store.

Respondent 6 said that he finds himself having to stand up against the many stereotypes that people have against young African American males. He said,

No matter what I do I feel as if I have to prove a point. Most people think that young African American males see education as not being hip. But me, I see it as cool, and my school grades show that.

Respondent 7 stated that he encounters a lot of prejudgment in life. He said,

I face a lot of prejudgment. People think that I am not going to college and that I'm going to drop out of high school just because of what I look like. I find myself fighting those prejudgments everyday that I get closer to graduating from high school.

Respondent 8 said that he does not encounter any problems. He stated that everyone he encounters in life pretty much treats him fairly.

Respondent 9 said,

Stereotypes have been the biggest issue for me. As an African American male, most people take me as a no-good sorry Black student just because of my race and gender. They never once take the chance to get to know me for the person that I am. I find myself fighting this by making my personality more apparent by introducing myself, shaking hands, and initiating a conversation before a person makes judgment about me.

Respondent 10 stated that he endures instances of racism at his job most of the time. He said,

I face a lot of racism being a young African American male. Often at my job, people come in who refuse for me to serve them food because I am Black. They make comments as if my skin color is going to rub off in their food. When this happens, my manager makes them leave the restaurant, but their leaving does not remove the pain that I feel knowing that people like that still exist in the world.

Interview Question 5. Interview Question 5 asked, “how would you describe the level of support available to you from teachers and staff?” Of the 10 participants who were interviewed, 4 (40%) described that their level of support from teachers and staff was great, and 3 (30%) described it as insensitive. The participants’ individual interview responses are detailed below.

Respondent 1 described the level of support given to him by teachers and staff as good. He said, “They give me good support. They try to guide me the right way, but a lot of the times, they wait too late to provide the support.”

Respondent 2 gave the same response as Respondent 1. He stated that the teachers and staff give him good support and that many seem interested in his academic journey.

Respondent 3 stated, “From a scale of 1 to 5, I say that the teachers and staff support for me is a 2. Most of my teachers don’t care what I do with my life.”

Respondent 4 stated that he receives some mediocre support from a few of his teachers, but the majority of them are very insensitive. He said,

A few of the teachers care, but most of them don't care. They are just ready to see you leave. Some teachers just don't care about what you do. They just want you to get their work done and stay out of their way.

Respondent 5 said,

The teachers here don't care about you unless you are one of their chosen pets. They show favoritism a lot, which hurts the people who really need the help. When it comes to Black males, teachers really don't expect much from you because they think that we all are the same. They think we are all lazy and don't want nothing out of life so they don't even try to work with us.

Respondent 6 cited that the support level from teachers and staff as moderate. He said, "I feel like the teachers and staff gave me information about college and stuff, but they didn't give enough. Most teachers will talk to you about college, but they rarely go into detail."

Respondent 7 said, "It's great. Most teachers support me. They gave out a lot of scholarship information, and they directed me to the right place for help with applications, particularly the guidance counselor."

Respondent 8 acknowledged the teachers and staff as being very supportive. He said, the "level of support from teachers and staff is great. They take no slack from me. They recognize the potential in me, and they expect me to succeed."

Respondent 9 said, "the teachers and staff really care about me. They pull me to the side and talk to me whenever I'm slacking in something or when I need to do something."

Respondent 10 stated, "the support level from teachers and staff is high. Teachers always ask me where did I apply for college. They also ask me about my college entrance exam scores and stuff like that."

Interview Question 6. Interview Question 6 asked, how would you describe the quality of education you received from your high school? Of the 10 participants who

were interviewed, 4 (40%) described their quality of education as mediocre, and 4 (40.0%) cited their quality of education as pretty good or excellent. Of the 4 participants who cited their quality of education as mediocre, all 4 (100%) were participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school. As for the 4 participants who described their quality of education as pretty good or excellent, all 4 (100%) were participants who chose to enroll in college after completing high school. The participants' individual interview responses are detailed below.

Respondent 1 cited the quality of education as pretty average. He said, "The teachers tried to prepare me for college, but I wasn't all that interested because I knew that I would be going to the military."

Respondent 2 stated his quality of education as being ordinary. He said, "They prepared me pretty decent, but I don't think prepared me enough for college."

Respondent 3 stated that he felt as if his quality of education received from high school was average. He indicated that he did not think it was something to brag about. He said, "the education I received was average, but the teachers could have put a lot more into it."

Respondent 4 indicated that his quality of education was poor. He said, "I don't think my high school prepared me for anything, I mean anything. A lot of teachers quit their jobs before we can even get a lesson completed. Most of the time we have substitutes teaching us."

Respondent 5 said,

It's okay, but you have to be smart in order to really understand what is being taught. The teachers don't really explain stuff all that well, and they hate to take the time to work with you one on one. Basically, your grade depends on how good you pay attention in class.

Respondent 6 stated the quality of education he received from school was fair, but it could have been better. He said,

I learned stuff from this school, but I know if I could have went to another high school, I would have learned more. My school really doesn't have a lot of certified teachers and a lot of teachers are teaching out of field.

Respondent 7 said, "I think the quality of education received was pretty good. I always say you get out what you put in so I try to do a lot. I have learned a lot from this school."

Respondent 8 responded to this question the same way Respondent 7 did. He described his quality of education as being pretty good. However, he did make recognition of work that could be done to the curriculum. He said, "there's a lot of work that can be done to the curriculum, but our teachers do an excellent job working with what they got."

Respondent 9 said,

The education is pretty much excellent. There is nothing that I missed out on or that I lack in. The teachers made sure that I was taught all the things that I needed to know in order to successfully make it through college.

Respondent 10 stated his quality of education as being pretty good with the potential to be better. He said, "it's pretty good, but it could be better. Some teachers are not as effective as most. The teacher not being able to really teach in a certain area may cause you to miss something that you might need."

Data obtained from the six interview questions were coded and reduced into several common themes in order to answer Research Question 5. Results of the analysis produced several common themes that illustrate the nonacademic reasons that inhibited African American males from enrolling in college. Responses provided by the 5 participants who chose to attend college after high school were compared to the

responses of the 5 participants who chose not to enroll in college. This comparison was made as a means to identify the areas in which the non-college-enrolling participants lacked. Thus, these areas of deficiency were recognized as nonacademic factors that hindered their enrollment in college after high school completion. Appendix D descriptively presents a matrix of the most common themes that evolved from the participants' responses to the six interview questions.

The comparison of the interview responses revealed that the non-college-enrolling participants were deficient in (a) finances, (b) having a normal family structure, (c) family influence, and (d) teacher support and influence. Interview responses regarding lack of normal family structure and lack of teacher support and influence uphold the results revealed in the demographic data and in Research Questions 1 and 2.

Further, in response to Research Question 5, the findings in Table 14 and Appendix D clearly identify a number of noncognitive variables that play a major part in the lack of enrollment of African American males in higher education. Upon review of the total data set, the concepts that appeared most frequently were (a) lack of finances, (b) lack of self-confidence, (c) lack of family support and influence, (d) lack of teacher support and influence, and (e) the military as barriers that prevented African American males from enrolling in college after high school completion. In fact, lack of finances, lack of self-confidence, and the military materialized as hindrances in both the survey and interview data. However, the largest frequency of participants revealed lack of finances and the military as vital impediments to enrollment.

Findings for Research Question 6

Research Question 6 asked, what factors would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion? The data source for

Research Question 6 was collected from the SAS and student perception interviews. Participant responses from Question 53 on the SAS and Question 7 on the Student Perception Interview protocol were broken down into segments, coded, and then reduced into several common themes. The findings were presented using qualitative methods (i.e., frequencies and percentages).

Data were collected from one question on the SAS as a means to answer Research Question 5. Question 53 of the SAS asked, “What would you have needed in order to enroll in college after high school completion?” To answer this question, data were collected from 44 African American male high school seniors. Of this group, 22 chose not to enroll in college after completing high school and 22 chose to enroll in college after high school completion. An examination of the data reveals three themes as prominent factors that would influence more African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion. The three themes revealed were (a) knowledge about scholarships and financial aid, (b) having enough finances, and (c) a good support system. These themes had the three largest percentages of the participants’ responses. Because these responses were given by both groups of participants, they can be cited as practical influences if adequately provided that would encourage more African Americans to enroll in college after they had obtained their high school degree.

Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 15 as a means to distinguish the underlying needs that would encourage more African American males to enroll in college if sufficiently met. Of the 22 non-college-enrolling participants who responded to this question, 12 (27.2%) stated “help with the college application process” (i.e., completing entrance exams, enrollment applications, and applying for financial-aid assistance) were areas with which many African American males need help. The

participants affirmed that this source of assistance would help to encourage more African American males to enroll in college. Additionally, 11 (25.0%) participants indicated having a good support system or mentors, and 9 (20.4%) indicated career guidance as influential sources of need for African American males as well.

Table 15

Participants' Responses About Need to Influence College Enrollment

Response	No.	%
Help with college application process	12	27.0
Good support system or mentors	11	25.0
Help with improving ACT, SAT, and GPA	7	16.0
Don't know or nothing	5	11.3
Motivation	5	11.3
Self-confidence	1	2.0
Career guidance	9	20.4
More college information	1	2.0

Note. $N = 44$; ACT = American College Testing; SAT = Scholastic Assessment Test; GPA = grade point average.

The data obtained from Question 7 of the Student Perception Interview protocol was the second source of data used to answer Research Question 6. As a means of collecting the data, 10 participants were randomly selected to participate in an interview session with the researcher. Of the 10 participants, 5 chose to enroll in college after high school completion, and 5 chose not to enroll in college after high school completion. Each participant was asked, "What do you think high schools can do to influence or help

African American males to enroll in college after high school completion?”

Like the analysis for Research Question 5, the names of the interview participants were coded to protect their identity. The coded names of the 5 interview participants who chose not to enroll in college were Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the coded names of the 5 interview participants who chose to enroll in college were Respondents 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Interview Question 7. Interview Question 7 asked, “What do you think high schools can do to influence or help African American males to enroll in college after high school completion?” Of the 10 participants who were interviewed, 5 (50%) indicated that high schools could implement mentoring programs for their African American male student population that provided one-on-one motivation sessions with African American male college students as a means to influence college enrollment. Four (40%) of the interview participants indicated that high schools could provide help with completing college admissions and financial-aid applications. Noted as factors of discouragement, these processes were highly recognized in Question 53 of the survey data as needed factors to influence African American males to enroll in college. Additionally, 3 (30%) participants specified that high schools could create and implement college-bound programs that provide postsecondary awareness and garner student interest in college. Individual participants’ interview responses are detailed below.

Respondent 1 stated that high schools should offer programs that help students with completing college and financial-aid applications. He added that resources and information about college majors should be provided to students to help guide them in selecting the course of study that they would like to take upon entering college. He said,

High schools can provide classes or workshops that help African American males

with applying for financial aid so they wouldn't have to worry about trying to find a way to pay for college. High schools should look into what most African American males want to study in college at an early stage in high school and provide career guidance to help keep the interest.

Respondent 2 said, "they can help us study better for the ACT and SAT and offer more college-prep classes that offer skills on major selection and college survival."

Respondent 3 stated that high schools can develop college-preparation programs for African American males that will help to increase college awareness. He said, "high schools should have guest speakers to come out to schools and talk to African American males about attending college and show students how to complete financial-aid forms."

Respondent 4 indicated that high schools should first help African American male students pass statewide standardized tests. He added that this would "probably help more African American males graduate from high school and try college afterwards." He further stated,

High schools can help African American males prepare for the different environment that college will bring. High schools should also help African American males go through the college admissions and financial-aid process by showing them how to fill out the forms and obtain documents they may need in order to successfully apply.

Respondent 5 said,

High schools can help spread the awareness and advantages of going to college by having African American male college students come out to schools and mentor students to motivate them. High schools should also create shadowing programs that will allow students to shadow college students for a day. This will give high school students an idea of what college life is like.

Respondent 6 stated that high schools should offer college counseling that provides students with information on colleges, costs, and programs that are offered. He believed that college counseling will make the college application process seem less threatening. He said, "when most African American males hear about college, they get

discouraged because some people tell them that college is hard. High schools should counsel students about college to make it look like the necessary step after high school.”

Respondent 7 said that high schools should seek to ease the intimidation that appears when college is mentioned. He added that “high schools could better explain and show the advantages of going to college.” He further stated that “providing college tours and hands-on information could encourage more African American males to try college.”

Respondent 8 indicated that high schools need to have motivation workshops for their African American male populations. He said, “most African American males don’t enroll in college after high school because they are not motivated to do so.”

Respondent 9 stated that high schools should develop programs that help African American males stay on track for enrolling in college. He added that completing applications and specified forms is another struggle that high schools should help to ease. He further stated, “high schools should have programs that help African American males with completing college applications and writing admissions essays. Not really knowing these things keeps a lot of African American males from even applying for college.”

Respondent 10 said,

High schools should get African American male college students to come out to schools to mentor African American male students. This will replace the support system that many African American males do not have at home. Also, help with filling our financial applications will make the process easier for those who don’t have the money to pay for college.

The most common themes that evolved from the interview responses are shown in Table 15. Frequencies are displayed in the table as a means to show the number of participants who supported certain themes. Analysis of the data revealed three prominent themes that high schools should consider implementing in order to encourage the college enrollment of African American males. The themes are (a) help with the financial-aid

process, (b) implement mentoring programs, and (c) ACT and SAT preparation assistance. These themes were revealed as the most prominent because they had the largest frequencies among the 10 interview participants.

In response to Research Question 6, the findings in Tables 15 and 16 clearly offer a number of recommendations that high schools should consider as a means to influence or help more African American males enroll in college after completing high school. Moreover, the findings indicate that, in order for more African American males to pursue a higher education after high school completion, high schools need to provide (a) assistance with the financial-aid process, (b) campus mentoring programs, (c) ACT and SAT preparation assistance, and (d) career guidance.

Table 16

Themes of Participants' Responses to Recommendations for High School Influences on College Enrollment (N = 10)

	No. of participants
Things high schools should do	who gave this answer
Make college the next natural step	2
Show advantages	1
Help with financial-aid applications and process	6
Provide college entrance exam prep courses	3
Collegiate mentor program	4
College information classes	2
Career guidance	3
College tours	1

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Applied Dissertation

African American males are becoming obsolete from the halls and rosters of higher education. Earlier studies (Clayton et al., 2004; Leach, 2001; Willie, Garibaldi, & Reed, 1991) cited their deficiencies in high school completion as the major reason for this crisis. However, the obtainment of a high school diploma has become less of a hindrance and more of an achievement for African American males. This enabled the once chief barrier to sever its identity as the culprit of depleting college enrollment rates for African American males. With that being said, this study concentrated on discovering the primary nonacademic factors that presently support the above daunting information.

The purpose of this study was to identify the noncognitive variables that prevent African Americans males from enrolling in college after completing high school. The study focused on African American male high school seniors who attended a rural high school in the Florida panhandle. Forty-four of them were given the SAS, and 10 participated in an interview session with the researcher. Of the 44 participants, 22 chose to enroll in college after high school, and 22 did not. As for the 10 who were interviewed by the researcher, 5 chose to enroll in college after high school, and 5 did not. Moreover, the data acquired from both instruments were compiled, and the deriving information was used to affirm the major findings and implications of the findings and make the recommendations presented in this applied dissertation.

Interpretation of the Results Related to the Research Questions

Because the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the reasons why many African American males elected not to enroll in college after high school completion, the findings were separated for each by research question.

Six research questions guided this study. The research questions were the following:

1. Do particular demographic variables predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
2. Does school preparation predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
3. Does self-concept predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
4. Does social support predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion?
5. What noncognitive variables contribute to the low enrollment of African American male high school graduates in higher education?
6. What factors would influence African American males to pursue a higher education upon high school completion?

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 was hypothesized that particular demographic variables do not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. This hypothesis was tested using the logistic regression analysis, and based on the findings, this hypothesis was rejected. The findings from the study revealed that the presence of a significant male role model was significantly related to the college enrollment of African American males at the rural high school. The findings from this study helped to validate the relationship between specific demographic variables and college enrollment. The remaining three independent variables (i.e., employment, socioeconomic status, and family structure) showed no significant predictive ability in relation to the college enrollment of African American male high school seniors who attended the rural high school.

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 was hypothesized that school preparation does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. This hypothesis was tested using the logistic regression analysis, and based on the findings, this hypothesis was rejected. The findings from the study revealed that possession of adequate school preparation and support significantly predicted the college enrollment of African American male high school seniors at the rural high school. Examples of school preparation and support consisted of (a) attention and emotional support from teachers regarding postsecondary study, (b) knowledge on college requirements and expectations, and (c) a hands-on approach pertaining to college curriculum choices and financial assistance. Thus, a deficiency in any of the above decreases the likelihood of college enrollment.

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 was hypothesized that self-concept does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. This hypothesis was tested using the logistic regression analysis, and based on the findings, this hypothesis was retained. The findings discovered that self-concept did not predict the college enrollment of African American male high school seniors at the rural high school. Thus, the accumulation of knowledge about ones self, such as beliefs regarding personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles, did not garner a decision for college enrollment.

Research Question 4. Research Question 4 was hypothesized that social support does not predict whether African American males will enroll in college after high school completion. This hypothesis was tested using the logistic regression analysis, and based on the findings, this hypothesis was retained. The findings of the study revealed that social support did not predict the college enrollment of African American male high

school seniors at the rural high school. Thus, the presence of support from family and friends did not foresee college enrollment among the participants.

Research Question 5. The following are the top five factors that the participants identified as reasons that hindered the college enrollment of African American males: (a) lack of finances, (b) lack of self-confidence, (c) lack of family support and influence, (d) lack of teacher support and influence, and (e) the military. All of the factors suggested by the participants are shown in Tables 13 and 14.

Of the 22 non-college-enrolling participants surveyed in this study, 7 (31.8%) responded that lack of finances or money was the primary reason why they chose not to enroll in college after completing high school. Of the 5 non-college-enrolling participants who were interviewed, 2 (40.0%) stated that finances hindered their ability to enroll in college. The lack of money factor consisted of four subthemes that few participants expressed: (a) lack of money to pay for college, (b) being employed and attending college at the same time, (c) not wanting to go into debt by borrowing money from the federal government, and (d) not wanting to be a financial burden on their parents. During the interviews, the participants mentioned that money was hard to come by in their families and asking their parents to give them what little they had so that they could go to college was out of the question. In the interview, Respondent 4 stated,

My family doesn't have money for me to go to college. We are poor, and I wouldn't want my momma to spend any penny on college when she can use it to feed my little sisters. I just can't see myself doing that.

Lack of self-confidence was another common factor that was cited by participants as a hindrance to African American males regarding college enrollment. Four (18.1%) of the 22 the non-college-enrolling participants who were surveyed stated that they felt mentally unprepared to go to college. Many of them stated that they were not given

enough information from teachers and guidance counselors about the transition process to college. As a result, many developed a sense of uncertainty that prevented them from enrolling in college.

Lack of family support and influence was highly cited by participants as a factor that prevented African Americans from enrolling in college. Of the 5 non-college-enrolling participants who were interviewed, 3 (60%) indicated that education was not important to their family. Thus, given the factor that their family possessed apathy for education, these participants would less likely receive any sort of support or influence from their family to enroll in college. Motivational discussions and inquiries from family members regarding a postsecondary transition ceased to exist for these participants, which encouraged their decision not to enroll in college.

Lack of teacher support and influence was the fourth most common factor that was revealed from the study. Of the 5 non-college-enrolling participants who were interviewed, 3 (60%) stated that their teachers really did not care about them, especially when it came to the college process. When asked to describe the level of support received from teachers, 1 participant indicated that the favoritism that teachers showed to special students prevents many students from getting help who really need it. The participant said,

The teachers here don't care about you unless you are one of their chosen pets. They show favoritism a lot, which hurts the people who really need the help. Our teachers don't have much expectation for the Black males at our school. They think we are all lazy and worthless.

This overall assessment that teachers make about their African American male students inhibits them from wanting to work with the student regarding any aspect of the college-preparation process or academic-preparation process. Thus, this lack of a teacher-

student relationship disables any thoughts of college enrollment for these students.

During the interview, many of the participants stated that their teachers were the only source of support that many of them had because they did not have a support system at home. They recognized teachers' neglect puts a bad taste in their mouth about education, which disabled any thoughts they may have had about college or enrollment.

The military was the fifth factor that evolved from the study as a significant barrier to college enrollment for African American males. Of the 22 non-college-enrolling participants who were surveyed, 4 (18.1%) revealed enlistment in the military as their reason for not enrolling in college after completing high school. Moreover, 3 (60.0%) out of the 5 non-college-enrolling participants who were interviewed indicated that the military was the reason they chose not to enroll in college after high school completion as well. The researcher believes that enlistment in the military is an offset barrier to lack of finances. Many of the participants in the study stated that they chose to enlist in the military instead of enrolling in college because they did not have the money to enroll in college. The survey data reveal that 17 (77.2%) of the 22 non-college-enrolling participants who were surveyed were low-income students. Of these 17 participants, 4 (18.1%) indicated that they had no choice but to enlist in the military after high school because they did not have the money to pay for college. Similarly, of the 60.0% of non-college-enrolling interview participants who indicated the military as their reason for not enrolling in college, 100.0% stated that they chose to enlist in the military due to lack of finances to pay for college. Moreover, it can be noted that the lack of finances generates the military barrier, which implies that the military barrier is an indirect hindrance of college enrollment for African American males. This barrier at most prevents the immediate college enrollment of African American males.

Research Question 6. Findings from the study revealed (a) assistance with the financial-aid process, (b) campus mentoring programs, (c) ACT and SAT preparation assistance, and (d) career guidance as the top four influential factors that could persuade African American males to pursue a higher education after high school completion. All 44 participants in the study gave their perspective as to what factors high schools could implement in order to persuade more African American males to enroll in college. Of the four factors that derived from the study, assistance with the financial-aid process was overwhelmingly the most mentioned deficiency of African American males causing many of them to deter college enrollment. Of the 44 participants who were surveyed, 12 (27.2%) indicated that assistance with the college application process (i.e., admissions application, admissions essay, and financial-aid forms) was a need of most African American males in order to consider college enrollment. As for the 10 participants who were interviewed, 6 (60.0%) stated that adequate help with completing financial-aid applications was a resource that high schools should implement as a means to influence more African American males to enroll in college after completing high school. The relief of financial stress that financial-aid benefits can provide would be a deciding factor that positively impacts the enrollment of African American males in higher education.

The findings of the study revealed the need for high schools to employ on-campus mentoring programs to influence more African American males to pursue college enrollment. The participants in the study indicated that mentoring programs can provide motivation and support to help encourage African American males to enroll in college. Many participants suggested that the mentors be African American male college students. That way, the college experience can be shared with their mentee, a high school student, who then becomes curious and eager to try college. African American male college

student mentors can also alleviate any and all rumors that high school students may have heard about college that discourage them from enrolling. When discussed in the interview sessions, the participants cited the implementation of mentoring programs through high schools as a win-win approach to increasing the college-enrollment rate of African American males. Of the 44 participants who were surveyed, 11 (25.0%) indicated that African American males need a good support system, typically in the form of a mentor, if college enrollment is to be considered as an option after high school. Even though they look and speak as an adult, most African American males have the need for guidance when it comes to education. This is a notion that is becoming very prevalent in the college persistence literature.

The findings of the study revealed ACT and SAT preparation assistance as another prominent factor that high schools should adopt in order to influence more African American males to enroll in college. The participants indicated that ACT and SAT preparation is sporadic or nonexistent at the rural high school. Thus, having sufficient assistance in preparing for the exams will (a) create an awareness of the exams among African American males who lack knowledge of the exams and (b) help to impose an understanding of the importance of the ACT and SAT test score on college acceptance. Of the 44 participants who were surveyed, 7 (15.9%) indicated college entrance exam preparatory courses as a need in order to consider college enrollment. As for the 10 participants who were interviewed, 3 (30.0%) stated that high schools should offer ACT and SAT preparation assistance in order to influence more African American males to consider college enrollment.

Career guidance was revealed from the data of the study as a major factor that high schools should reckon with as an attempt to influence more African American males

to enroll in college. Thirty percent of the participants who were interviewed mentioned career guidance as a resource that high schools should proactively offer to students in order to assist them in becoming knowledgeable about specific careers as a means to spawn interest in college. During the interview, participants stated that they endured little career guidance in school, and the guidance counselors only provided information and assistance only when the student came to the counselor. Thus, all of the latter participants agreed that the lack of career knowledge made them feel completely lost in the college process. As upheld in the survey data, 9 (20.4%) of the 44 participants who were surveyed indicated career guidance as a necessity for African American males in enrolling and persisting through college.

Demographic findings. This section reveals demographic findings that were compiled in conjunction with data taken from the SAS and the Student Perception Interview protocol. Thus, other findings of this study are briefly summarized as follows:

1. There was significant difference in the age of the two groups of participants. The participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion were older than the participants who chose to enroll in college after high school completion. Of the participants who chose not to enroll in college, 7 (31.8%) were 19 years old, and 15 (68.1%) were 18 years old. As for the participants who chose to enroll in college after completing high school, 4 (18.0%) were 19 years of old, and 18 (81.1%) were 18 years old.

2. There was very little significant difference in the socioeconomic status of both groups of participants. More participants (77.3%) who chose not to enroll in college after high school were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than participants (68.2%) who chose to enroll in college after high school.

3. More participants (45.5%) who chose to enroll in college after high school followed the college-prep academic track than of participants (13.6%) who chose not to enroll in college after completing high school.

4. More participants (54.5%) who chose to enroll in college after completing high school lived in a two-parent home than participants (27.3%) who chose not to enroll in college after completing high school.

5. More participants (77.3%) who chose to enroll in college after completing high school took a college entrance exam than participants (50.0%) who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion.

6. More participants (45.4%) who chose to enroll in college after high school had significant male role models in their lives than participants (27.2%) who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion.

7. More participants (81.8%) who chose to enroll in college after high school were involved in student extracurricular activities than participants (50.0%) who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion.

8. The primary reasons given by participants for not enrolling in college after high school completion were that they could not afford it (59.0%), they decided to enlist in the military (31.8%), or got a full-time job (31.8%).

9. The primary reasons given by participants for enrolling in college after high school completion were to seek long-term income (54.4%), better self (27.2%), and obtain greater opportunities in life (18.1%).

Implications of the Findings

This section will affirm the implications of the findings of Research Questions 1-6. Thus, the implications are detailed below.

Demographic variables. The findings of this study revealed that particular demographic variables predict the college enrollment of African American males. Of the four variables analyzed (i.e., employment, socioeconomic status, family structure, and presence of a male role model), only one variable (presence of a male role model) showed a high predictive value regarding the college enrollment of African American males. This finding is compatible with the literature as some researchers (Bailey, 2003; Glenn, 2001; Gold, Burrell, Haynes, & Narceccchia, 1990; Harris, 1999; Jones, 2000; Morgan, 1996; Roach, 2001) have observed that the presence of a significant male role model does affect college enrollment. Whereas a role model is someone to be emulated, which can be done from afar, according to Pickett et al. (2000), a mentor is “a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.” Research (Brown, 1995; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996) supported the need for male role models, which represents a wide range of possibilities and options for the future of African American males. A suitable male role model is beneficial for promoting social, academic, and career success for African American males. However, male mentors have a closer relationship that offers guidance through various life events. Regardless of the term used (i.e., *male role model* or *mentor*), a connection with a significant caring male adult has enormous positive effects on the future aspirations of African American males.

The absence of a father figure in the families of many African American males makes this dynamic a particularly sought after commodity. Ross (1998) found that a relationship with a supportive male mentor or role model is a key factor that leads to the college entry of African American males. There was indication of this fact in the researcher’s study.

The need to have effective guidance regarding the college application process was

discussed frequently in many discussions with the participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school completion. Many of them indicated that this form of guidance should only come from African American males, particularly ones who are enrolled in college or were enrolled in college. The participants further indicated that gender- and ethnic-specific role models would be more effective because they would have endured similar life struggles and would understand the challenging circumstances that most African American males face. Perhaps the participants realized the damaging effects of this deficiency as it relates to their decision to reject college enrollment. This implies that many African American males do possess an interest in college enrollment; however, they fail to act upon their interest due to the fear that develops when they realize they have no guide (i.e., a role model) to route them through the process. Furthermore, the finding that 20 (45.4%) of the college-enrolling participants had a significant male role model as compared to 12 (27.2%) of the non-college-enrolling participants suggests that the lack of a significant male role model is a prominent noncognitive variable that inhibits the college enrollment of African American males.

School preparation. The findings of this study revealed that school preparation predicts the college enrollment of African American males. The findings echo the literature of researchers (Ekstrom, 1985; Falsey & Heyns, 1984; Hossler & Stage, 1992; Lewis & Morrison, 1975; Litten, 1982) who have studied the effect that college readiness through high schools has on a students' inclination to attend college. Cabrera and La Nasa (2001) found that the development of college readiness during the high school years offers significant opportunities to direct undecided, unaware, and underachieving students toward college. Thus, this finding is important to African American male students when choosing to enroll in college.

Kim (2004) conducted a study in which it was found that college-choice information, application and admissions procedures, and financial-aid opportunities were the basic components that were addressed by high school teachers and counselors as a means to prepare students for college. The author further noted that students who received the latter information were more likely to enroll in college as opposed to those who do not. The present finding supports this notion. Furthermore, the high predictive value revealed in this study suggests that the participants who chose not to enroll in college were not given the same adequate information and encouragement from teachers and counselors regarding the college process that the participants who chose to enroll in college were given. A possible explanation for this is that the non-college-enrolling participants who are older and more independent were more reluctant to ask for assistance with the college process. Perhaps their stubbornness addresses their self-confidence, that is, the level of belief of whether or not the student can succeed in college. Whatever the case, these findings suggest that a look is needed at whether or not high schools are proactively providing college readiness assistance to all students.

Self-concept. The findings of this study revealed that self-concept does not predict the college enrollment of African American males. After researching self-concept, the information found does not clearly support the researcher's findings. Recent research by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001) examined the impact of student confidence on predisposition to college. These authors asserted that "confidence in one's relevant abilities and optimism plays a major role in an individual's successful negotiation of challenging life transitions" (p. 55). The Chemers et al. study also found that affective processes pertaining to anxiety and negative emotions could hinder and debilitate proactive behaviors. In other words, those who exhibit higher levels of self-concept are

less likely to be incapacitated by anxiety of fear and more likely to use coping resources. For this reason, self-concept is highly associated with student persistence through high school to college. There was no indication of this fact in this study. This implies that the participants' level of self-confidence did not dictate their decision to either enroll or not enroll in college. Furthermore, whether they are enrolling in college or not, the self-appraisal of African American males seems to be an insignificant factor in their analysis of college enrollment.

Social support. The findings of this study revealed that social support does not predict the college enrollment of African American males. After researching social support, the information found does not clearly support the researcher's findings. Investigations of college enrollment have consistently shown that strong parental and peer support increases the chance that students will attend college (Carpenter & Fleishman, 1987; Conklin & Dailey, 1981; Flagg, 1985; Hossler & Stage, 1992). Contrary to the findings in this study, some studies show that parental support is a predictor of educational aspirations for African American students (Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Perna & Titus, 2005). Research conducted by Flagg suggested, for example, that parents have an influence on African American's likelihood of enrolling in college. The study showed that African American mothers were the most significant factor followed by their fathers in influencing their sons to go to college. King (1996) noted that family support increased the likelihood of college enrollment for African American males from 66% to 75%. Thus, the results of this study did not indicate this fact.

Researchers have found a relationship between college enrollment and the level of support of peers (Carpenter & Fleishman, 1987; Falsey & Heyns, 1984; Hossler & Stage, 1992). Tillery (1973) also found that students with friends who had postsecondary plans

were more likely to plan to attend college. In contrast to the present findings, friends' plans and wishes were found to be significant and powerful predictors of college enrollment (Perna, 2000; Sokatch, 2002). In a study done by Hossler and Stage (1992), it was found that ninth-grade students with friends who planned to continue their education after high school exhibited an increased likelihood of college enrollment themselves. This finding may suggest that students who are not planning to enroll in college are more likely to be influenced by their peers than those students who are planning to enroll in college. Furthermore, the results from these studies suggest that peers influence the students' decisions to attend college. However, like social support, these results were also not indicated in this study.

Noncognitive variables. The results of this study revealed that (a) lack of finances, (b) lack of self-confidence, (c) lack of family support and influence, (d) lack of teacher support and influence, and (e) the military were primary nonacademic variables that contributed to the low enrollment of African American males. After researching barriers to college enrollment, the information found does support the findings of this study.

This finding has shown strong support for Tinto's (1975) attribution theory. The attribution theory explains how certain events happen and what factors or causes contribute to the outcome of these events. Thus, the above five variables are recognized in this study as the most prominent events that happen to African American males that inhibits them from enrolling in college. Other researchers have studied nonacademic factors that prevent African American males from enrolling in college. In a study done by Noguera (1995), it was found that social, psychological, and economic issues negatively impact the enrollment of African American males in higher education. In a similar study, Lang (1992) found that the availability of family resources; access to institutional

financial-aid resources; and institutional barriers to access, enrollment, and retention were specific factors that explained why qualified African American males do not to enroll in college. Further, Lang's research findings cited socioeconomic backgrounds of African American males as the reigning factor for nonenrollment. Moreover, the finding of this study clearly supports the results of Noguera and Lang.

A large percentage of non-college-enrolling participants (59.1%) identified lack of finances as the main factor that prevented them from enrolling in college (see Table 9). Several researchers (Heller, 1997; Kane & Spizman, 1994; St. John, 1990) have noted that cost affects the enrollment of students of color. Also, results from the econometric models of college choice show the socioeconomic background of the family, educational levels of the parents, expected cost, and future earnings are positively related to students' decisions to enroll in college (Hossler et al., 1989; Hossler et al., 1999; Hossler & Stage, 1992). Coleman (2001) found that family income influences the likelihood of college enrollment. It is the best predictor of who will go to college. As a result, Coelli (2005) noted that low-income families have significant negative effects on the college enrollment of African Americans. In a study done by DesJardins, Ahlburg, and McCall (2006), it was found that an estimated 25% of low-income students who have the grades and test scores to qualify for college did not apply for college due to financial circumstances. Despite the type of financial strain that African American males are enduring (i.e., low income, cost-to-benefit ratio, and financial-aid policies), these results clearly support the findings of the researcher's study. Thus, the findings imply that a large percentage of participants who chose not to enroll in college after high school due to lack of finances reside in low-income families.

Influential factors. Findings from the study revealed (a) assistance with the

financial-aid process, (b) campus mentoring programs, (c) ACT and SAT preparation assistance, and (d) career guidance as primary factors that high schools should implement in order to influence more African American males to enroll in college after completing high school. These results provide evidence to support the findings of Freeman (1999) concerning how the availability of precollege and social resources at educational institutions play a role in the decision to attend college. Freeman noted that career development, college exposure, and emotional and social intervention resources represent the various needs of African American males that should be addressed by secondary institutions in order to increase college entry. The author further noted that being exposed to college through precollege programs that implement college tours, mentorships, exam preparation, and career development contributes to making college real to African American males by giving them a point of reference. Thus, all of the components instilled in this point of reference will likely guide African American males in the direction of college enrollment.

Limitations

According to Roberts (2004), all studies have some limitations. Roberts further noted that researchers should be honest about these limitations and how they affect the results of the study.

There were several limitations in the research design of this study. The most important limitation was the small sample size of African American males who were investigated for this study. Due to its size, the research sample should not be generalized nationwide. The generalization may only represent the panhandle region of the state of Florida. In qualitative research, 44 is considered an adequate sample for finding possible relationships, variations, and patterns (Cohen, 1992).

Another limitation to this study was that all of the participants were from a single high school in one rural school district. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to high schools in other school districts.

A student's decision to attend college was another limitation to this study. The researcher assumed that attending college was a decision that was made by a student over a period of time. Therefore, factors that influence students not to attend college span over a student's life instead of a single time period or individual event.

Using a self-report instrument was another limitation. Self-report data are limited by the honesty and frankness of the survey participants. All responses to the questions were provided by individual subjects. Their truthfulness and candid responses have to be relied upon. Because all participants were volunteers who were graduating high school seniors, they did not benefit from not responding truthfully. Their responses were bounded by their memories and their own individual experiences.

The interpretation of the data may be biased because the researcher shared the same ethnic background of the participants, which may assist the researcher in developing preconceived interpretations of the data. Furthermore, all precautions that could be taken were built into the research design to address these limitations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered in light of the findings presented in this research study:

1. A larger sample from a nationwide population of African American male high school seniors from rural high schools throughout the country would provide more representative data on this group as a whole.
2. This study generated questions about the possibility of more noncognitive

variables that may hinder college enrollment of African American male high school seniors. Additional studies should be conducted to determine if there is a relationship between other noncognitive variables that may prevent the enrollment of African American males in higher education.

3. Because the presence of a significant male role model predicts college enrollment, mentoring programs should be implemented in the schools and community. These programs would provide support to students in becoming acquainted with African American male college students who would encourage college enrollment and career guidance. Mentors would help students become familiar with the need for a college degree in today's global market.

4. High school principals, guidance counselors, and teachers should encourage African American males to follow a demanding academic track (i.e., college preparatory) while in high school to prepare them for college.

5. High school principals, guidance counselors, and teachers should thoroughly explain to African American males the importance of developing a strong work ethic while pursuing academic excellence. Several researchers have noted that high school quality affects a student's tendency to enroll in college. Elsworth, Day, Hurworth, and Andrews (1982) reported findings suggesting that high school quality had a positive effect on a students' tendency to enroll in college.

6. All high school teachers and parents should have high expectations for African American males and encourage them to go to college at all times. Parents need to possess cultural capital and pass it down to their children. According to McDonough (1997), cultural capital is the property of elite and middle-class families. They value education, and they do a good job of stressing the value of education to their children.

7. All school districts should develop college-bound partnership programs to encourage African American males to pursue a higher education.

8. All school districts should work to employ more African American male teachers and administrators so that they can serve as internal role models for African American male students.

9. All high schools in all school districts should create, sponsor, and implement college fairs. These fairs should provide detailed information and facts about various colleges. Student will also be able to speak with college representatives as a means to ensure that they have correctly selected a major and completed all necessary applications.

The majority of the above recommendations are reasonable, practical, and easy for high schools to employ. Moreover, little funding will be necessary within schools and within school districts to execute many of the strategies suggested. Thus sufficiently implemented on a regular basis, these approaches can significantly boost the college-enrollment rate of African American males.

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Appendix A

“I Was Cool”

“I Was Cool”

by J. C. Gaston

They said the doors of opportunity were closing fast,
and all the signs said that the good times weren't going to last,
but that didn't bother me,
because I was cool.

My teachers kept trying to get me to learn read'n, writ'n and math,
talking about you need that stuff to make it down life's path.
But I just looked at them, and laughed.
I said, “Ya'll might need to know that stuff, but not me,
because I'm cool.”

Them teachers was always getting on my case,
and I told them I knew that it was because of my race.
They just couldn't deal with me,
because they was square,
and I was cool.

I use to be so clean everybody would stop and stare,
'cause I was looking good with my curl free on my hair.
Hey, if you've got it, you've got it,
and I knew I was cool and looking good.
I didn't learn nothing in school, but they still let me pass.
I was sho gett'n ova,
even if I was at the bottom of my class.
But they still let me grad-u-ate from high school.
I definitely got ova!
But you can do that when you're cool.

After grad-u-ation I got clean and went to look for me a job.
I knew I was going to make some long bread, buy me a new ride,
and stay clean and cool everyday!
I was definitely going to have everything my way!

But trying to read them job applications was far from a charm, and I told the dude at the
employment office I couldn't write too good, 'cause I hurt my arm.
But the look on his face told me that he didn't really believe that,
and the dude wasn't hardly impressed by my bad new hat.

Well to make a long story short, I finally got me a job, but I don't get much pay,
And from the way things look it's always gonna be that way.
I didn't learn much in school,
And you sure don't get paid much when all you can do is be cool.

If I could go back to school I'd learn all I could,
and everytime I talk to other brothers I tell them they should.
I realize now that my future's not too bright,
and without education it's kinda hard to make things right.

You know now that I think about it,
maybe some of those teachers that I thought was getting on my case,
were actually trying to help me in the education race.
It sure hurts when I realize that with my abilities,
I could have been anything that I wanted to be,
if I had applied myself in school.

But instead of learning all I could in school,
I spent most of my time,
sitting in the back of the room,
looking good,
and being cool.

Note. From "The Destruction of the Young Black Males: The Impact of Popular Culture and Organized Sports" (p. 372), by J. C. Gaston, 1986, *Journal of Black Studies*, 16, 369-384. Copyright 1986 by Sage. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix B
Student Attribution Survey

STUDENT ATTRIBUTION SURVEY

Directions:

Please answer the following questions by filling in the blank or circling the appropriate answer choice. Answer each question to the best of your knowledge. Once you have completed the survey, please return it to the survey proctor. Thank you for your participation!

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age _____?

2. Are you employed?

Yes

No

3. If yes, approximately how many hours do you work per week? Circle **one** choice only.

a. 1 to 10

b. 11 to 20

c. 31 to 40

d. Over 40

4. Are you eligible for free or reduced-price lunch?

Yes

No

5. What is your overall grade point average (GPA) _____?

6. Circle the academic track or course of study that you are following in high school.

college preparatory

general

vocational

7. Did you take a college entrance exam (ex. ACT, SAT)?

Yes

No

If yes, which entrance exam did you take? _____

8. How would you rate the quality of the education that you have received in high school?

Circle **one** choice only.

excellent

good

fair

poor

9. Do you expect to enroll in college after high school completion?

Yes

No

If you answered “Yes” skip to question # 11.

10. If you are not likely to enroll in college after high school, please choose the reason why? Circle all that apply.

1. To accept a good job
2. To enter the military service
3. It would cost more than my family or I could afford
4. Marriage
5. Disinterest in study
6. Lack of academic ability
7. Insufficient reading or study skills
8. Other : _____

11. Do you live in a two-parent home?

Yes

No

12. If no, which parent do you live with?

Mother

Father

Other _____

13. Please circle any of your family members who attended or graduated from college.
Please circle all that apply.

mother

father

sister(s)

brother(s)

grandmother

grandfather

uncle(s)

aunt(s)

cousin(s)

14. Is there a significant male role model in your life (ex. father, grandfather, uncle, older brother, etc.)?

Yes

No

SECTION II: SCHOOL PREPARATION

Please read each statement and circle the response most appropriate to your experience.

15. The courses that I am taking or have taken in high school will enable me to get a good

job after graduation.

Yes No

16. I feel academically prepared to do college work.

Yes No

17. I think a college education important.

Yes No

18. My teachers, guidance counselor, or principal talked with me about college.

Yes No

19. My guidance counselor explained how to apply for college.

Yes No

20. My guidance counselor explained how to apply for financial assistance for college.

Yes No

21. My family has talked with me about attending college.

Yes No

22. My family has made financial preparations for me to attend college.

Yes No

23. I need financial assistance so that I may attend college.

Yes No

SECTION III: SELF-CONCEPT

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items. Respond to the statements below with your present feelings or with your expectations of how things will be. **Write in your answer to the left of each item.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

- _____ 24. It should not be very hard to get a B (3.0) average at my high school.
- _____ 25. I get easily discouraged when I try to do something and it does not work.
- _____ 26. I am sometimes looked up to by others because of my leadership abilities.
- _____ 27. There is no use in doing things for people; you only find that you get taken advantage of in the long run.
- _____ 28. In groups where I am comfortable, I am often looked to as a leader.
- _____ 29. I expect to have a harder time than other students of different races.
- _____ 30. Once I start something, I finish it.
- _____ 31. When I believe strongly in something, I act on it.
- _____ 32. I am as academically smart as the average student at my high school.
- _____ 33. I expect I will encounter racism at some time in my life.
- _____ 34. People can pretty easily change me even though I thought my mind was already made up on the subject.
- _____ 35. My friends and relatives do not feel I should attend college.
- _____ 36. My family has always wanted me to go to college.
- _____ 37. I sometimes view being smart and taking honor classes as acting "White."
- _____ 38. I want a chance to prove myself academically as compared to students of other races.
- _____ 39. My grades don't really reflect what I can do.
- _____ 40. I have a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses.

SECTION IV: SOCIAL SUPPORT

If you are going to attend college after high school completion, skip to question #42.

Please read each statement and circle the response most appropriate to your experience. There are no right and wrong answers. Give a response for each item, a through i.

- 1= strongly disagree
2= disagree
3=somewhat disagree

4= neither agree nor disagree

5= somewhat agree

6= agree

7= strongly agree

41. I chose not to attend college because of the lack of influence from:

a. Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Family members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Girlfriend/Boyfriend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Church leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Mentor/current or former teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. School guidance counselor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. School principal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i. Other (Please list)							
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please continue using the following indicators:

1= strongly disagree

2= disagree

3=somewhat disagree

4= neither agree nor disagree

5= somewhat agree

6= agree

7= strongly agree

42. Teachers let me know that I do well in my school work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. I spend my spare time with others who are not going to college.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. It is important to my family that I attend college.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. I need to have a job in order to attend college.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. One or more of my high school friends are going to college.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. I have succeeded in high school by just relying on myself.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. My current friends are the same ones I had in middle school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. I have (had) close friends who dropped out of high school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. I often approach my teachers for additional help outside of class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION V: MOTIVES & NEEDS

51. Please state the reason or reasons for your decision to enroll or not to enroll in college.

52. What do you plan to do after graduating from high school?

53. What would you have needed in order to enroll in college after high school completion?

54. Please list three goals that you have for yourself right now:

1.

2.

3.

55. Please list three things that you are proud of having done:

1.

2.

3.

56. Please list groups you belonged to and offices you have held (if any) in your high school or community.

(School):

(Community):

Note. Items 10, 15-40, and 54-56 were adapted from *Beyond the Big Test: Noncognitive Assessment in Higher Education* (pp. 35-58), by W. Sedlacek, 2004, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 2004 by John Wiley and Sons. Adapted with permission. Items 1, 3, and 41-50 were adapted from "The Role of Internal Attribution and Social Support in the College Success of African American Males" (pp. 164-167), by C. Endecavage, 2000, *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(12), 4339A. Copyright 2000 by C. Endecavage. Adapted with permission.

Appendix C

Student Perception Interview Protocol

Introductory Remarks:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This interview will probably take about 15 minutes to complete. As I mentioned to you before, we're doing these interviews with African American male high school seniors who will and will not attend college after high school completion. The information from these interviews will be analyzed to identify the noncognitive variables that hinder and/or prevent African American males from enrolling in institutions of higher education. The information will also be used to provide a basis for future interest in developing intervention programs on high school campuses that will assist African American males in enrolling in college after high school completion. This interview will be used for this purpose only and will be confidential. You will not be identified by name in the research findings or in any conversations with other people.

1. How would you describe your current life situation?
2. What influenced your decision to enroll or not enroll in college after high school completion?
3. How important is education to you? What importance does your family place on education?
4. What problems and/or challenges do you encounter as an African American male high school student?
5. How would you describe the level of support available to you from teachers and staff?
6. How would you describe the quality of education you received from high school?
7. What do you think high schools can do to influence and/or help African American males to enroll in college after high school completion?

Thank you so much for taking your time for this interview and for all you have shared with me. Please contact me if you would like to obtain a copy of the research findings.

Appendix D

Matrix of Participants' Responses to Interview Questions 1-6

Matrix of Participants' Responses to Interview Questions 1-6

Question #1: How would you describe your current life situation?

Enrolling in college	No.	Not enrolling in college	No.
Lived in a 2-parent home	3	Live with extended family	3
Lived with single mom	2	Live with single mom	2
Normal/great life	3	Financial stress	3

Question #2: What influenced your decision to enroll or not enroll in college?

Enrolling in college	No.	Not enrolling in college	No.
Better life for myself	4	Military	3
See family struggle and want more	2	Finances	2
Upward Bound Program	1	Not ready/not confident	1

Question #3: How important is education to you? What importance does your family place on education?

Enrolling in college	No.	Not enrolling in college	No.
Family influence	5	Education somewhat important	2
Education is very important	5	Not important in family	3
Parents didn't go to college	3	College didn't come up	2
		Education is not for everybody	1

Question #4: What problems and/or challenges do you encounter as an African American male high school student?

Enrolling in college	No.	Not enrolling in college	No.
No problems	1	Peer pressure of drugs/violence	2
Defeated attitudes/neg. stereotypes	4	Appearance assumptions	5

Question #5: How would you describe the level of support available to you from teachers and staff?

Enrolling in college	No.	Not enrolling in college	No.
Great support	4	Good support	2
Moderate – little support	1	They don't really care	3

Question #6: How would you describe the quality of education you received from high school?

Enrolling in college	No.	Not enrolling in college	No.
Pretty good/excellent	4	Poor	1
Fair	1	Mediocre	4

Note. No. = number of participants who gave that particular response; $N = 5$ per group.