CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter includes (1) conclusions derived from the findings, (2) recommendations for colleges and universities, and (3) recommendations for further research.

The main purpose of this study was to identify variables associated with academic achievement of African-American males in undergraduate four-year educational institutions. This inquiry was considered important because (1) there was no synthesis of studies on academic achievement of undergraduate, African-American males, and (2) there was a need to identify variables that can be affected in ways to improve the academic achievement of African-American males. The purpose was met by organizing and integrating the findings of 13 studies and interpreting the meaning of this body of research.

The review of the literature was a two-step process.

1. The researcher conducted a literature review on academic achievement of African-American males in higher education. This review of the literature included research-based articles, dissertations, journal articles, and books. From this body of literature, the researcher identified three broad categories of variables related to academic achievement. The categories were (1) personal (cognitive and non-cognitive) variables, (2) demographic variables, and (3) institutional variables. These categories served as the framework for identifying research-based studies for inclusion in the synthesis.

2. The second step of the literature review was the identification, selection, and in-depth examination of studies of the academic achievement of undergraduate African-American males. Thirteen studies meeting pre-established criteria for selection were located. These studies became the database for this synthesis.
Conclusions

Forty-eight variables were found to be associated with academic achievement of African-American males. These variables were categorized as personal variables (non-cognitive variables or cognitive variables), demographic variables, and institutional variables. The following conclusions were derived from these sets of variables.

Personal, Non-cognitive Variables

There were 32 personal, non-cognitive variables associated with the grade-point averages of African-American males. Those with higher grade-point averages had healthier attitudes toward themselves. They saw themselves as being more courageous, leading more exciting lives, being more imaginative, maintaining a more orderly and “clean” way of life, being emotionally intelligent, feeling better about themselves personally and academically, and relying on themselves for solutions to their social and academic problems. They were more likely to have higher self-confidence and lower fun-loving and risk-taking (of personal harm) personalities than those with lower grade-point averages.

African-American males with higher grade-point averages had a healthier orientation toward their academic work than those with lower grade-point averages. They were more likely to have higher educational aspirations, to feel that they were in control of their academic performance, to have lower preferences for long-term goals, to have favorable opinions of their study habits, and to have greater faith in their academic ability than their counterparts with lower grade-point averages. They were more likely to aspire to higher levels of achievement, to stick to a problem for longer periods, to be organized, and to want to understand many areas of knowledge.

African-American males with higher grade-point averages had a healthier orientation toward others than those with lower grade-point averages. They were more likely to value helpfulness, to accept mixed racial dating, to enjoy being with friends and people, to want to control their environments and to influence people, to give sympathy
and comfort readily, and to report favorable relationships with others, and they were less likely to enjoy being the center of attention.

African-American males with higher grade-point averages had a healthier orientation to their colleges and universities. They were more likely to be satisfied with the academic advising and tutoring they were receiving, and they were less likely to report high levels of alienation from their colleges and universities.

**Personal, Cognitive Variables**

There were four personal, cognitive variables associated with the college grade-point averages of African-American males. The overriding conclusion is that success in high school is an excellent predictor of success in college. Those African-American males who left high school with high grade-point averages, high class ranks, and high college entrance examination scores were more likely to earn higher college grade-point averages than their peers who did not do so well in high school.

**Demographic Variables**

There were seven demographic variables found to be associated with the college grade-point averages of African-American males. These variables confirm the conclusion that African-American males who achieve well in high school will continue to achieve well in college. Those students who went directly to four-year colleges, who were younger in age, who did not enroll in developmental courses, and who enrolled in humanities and arts programs earned higher grade-point averages than their older counterparts who transferred from community colleges, enrolled in developmental courses, or majored in math or science.

**Institutional Variables**

There were five institutional variables found to be associated with the undergraduate academic achievement of African-American males. African-American males who attended predominantly black institutions earned higher grade-point averages than their counterparts who attended predominantly white institutions. However, this conclusion is not quite that simple. African-American males who attended predominantly
white institutions and who came from high schools that had a very different ethnic mix than the colleges they were attending earned higher grade-point averages than their counterparts who attended colleges that were very similar to their high schools in ethnic mix. This seems to indicate that ethnic mix is an enriching, challenging experience that motivates higher achievement. It was also found that those students with higher grade-point averages reported favorable opinions about their integration in and satisfaction with the campus environment and the support they received from their colleges or universities than those with lower grade-point averages.

Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

What can colleges and universities do to improve the academic achievement of African-American males once they are admitted to undergraduate school? Because there is a large number of personal, non-cognitive variables associated with grade-point averages of African-American males, the following recommendations are focused on this category of variables. Programs that are based on these variables have a better chance of assisting African-American males to do well in college.

Recommendation 1

Advisors should go beyond the academic arena and help students to better understand how their perceptions of self and their environment may affect their academic performance. Therefore, it appears that advising students could expand to include mentoring them. Academic and personal mentoring of students serves as a conduit to a healthy attitude towards academic work, study habits, orientation to others, colleges, and universities. African-American males with these characteristics perform better than those without these traits.

Recommendation 2

A liaison should be established between high schools and colleges and universities. The liaison could work with high school counselors on helping African-American males to academically prepare for college life. Students who master the basic skills in high school do not need to enroll in developmental programs and are more likely
to achieve a higher grade-point average than those who enroll in undergraduate, developmental programs.

**Recommendation 3**

Colleges and universities should hold community forums to inform parents of the important relationship that exists between school performance and future, undergraduate, academic achievement. Forums such as these would serve to promote parental awareness, which in turn may motivate them to help their students develop strong study habits and to value learning.

**Recommendation 4**

College and university orientation sessions should include presentations and classes on the variables that affect grade-point averages. Students who enroll in these sessions may develop a personal awareness of how these variables affect their performance.

**Recommendation 5**

The data show that students who interact and enjoy the company of others have higher grade-point averages than those who do not. Orientation activities should encourage students to socialize with those who are different from themselves and to help students begin developing the skill and comfort needed to interact effectively with other ethnic groups.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

While studies have been conducted on academic achievement of undergraduate African-Americans at four-year institutions, further research is needed on grade-point averages of African-American males at historically black colleges and universities, at predominantly white colleges and universities, and at community colleges.

Another recommendation for further research is the investigation of academic achievement of African-American males attending institutions with a different racial composition than their high schools. It would be of interest to study measures of
academic achievement other than grade-point averages. Finally, it is recommended that future research be devoted to a synthesis of studies of the variables associated with academic achievement of African-American males at the graduate level rather than the undergraduate level which was the focus of the present study.


American students in predominantly white and in historically black public universities (pp. 127-141). Albany, NY: State University of New York.


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