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The Impact Mentoring has on Black Males' Sense of Belonging and Resiliency at  
Historically White Institutions of Higher Education

by  
Derek Montel Brown II

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education.

St. Paul, MN  
2022

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## Abstract

Data analysis found that having a mentorship relationship for Black males at historically White higher education institutions had a significantly different level of resiliency and sense of belonging. Previous research has focused on qualitative data aligned with this quantitative study's results.

This study utilized a quantitative methodology to determine the level and direction of the relationship between male Black college students' participation in a mentoring relationship while attending predominantly White institutions and their resiliency and sense of belonging. There were 5, 282 participants in the original data set from the institution. Those who identified as Black or African American made up only 6.4% (337) of overall participants. The final sample size for this study consisted of 103 participants who met the requirements of 1) identifying as male, 2) identifying as Black or African American, and 3) enrolled as a full-time student. Results from this study indicate that mentorship relationship with an academic or student affairs personnel has a significant impact on Black males' resiliency and sense of belonging.

## Acknowledgments

First, I would like to give honor to my lord and savior, Jesus Christ. I would like to thank my parents, grandparents, siblings, loved ones, and friends for giving me encouragement, support, and love during this process. Thank you to my committee for their support along this journey. This is for every Black male who has the aspiration of being the first or next in their family to attain a degree. The sky can't be the limit when there are footprints on the moon.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **Introduction**

Gender differences in educational attainment in higher education are becoming more apparent across the nation with men losing pace with women in many disciplines (Harris, 2018; Whitmire, 2010). In fact, Black males score lower than Black females on most standardized tests and are more likely to drop out of school before graduation. This suggests serious disparities in levels of achievement and degree attainment (Brooms, 2016; Harris, 2018). In the United States, Harris (2018) indicated that males earn lower grades in secondary academic disciplines than females, have higher high school and college attrition rates, and have lower postsecondary enrollment rates. Black male adolescents face unique barriers in schools that may contribute to racial disparities in educational outcomes (Ellis et al., 2015), such as tracking into special education and being viewed as disengaged in learning.

Students from low-income urban communities of color continue to be underrepresented on college campuses and are least likely to access the resources needed to be college-ready (Warren, 2016). Being academically underprepared among peers who are equipped to excel in college can create a range of psychological challenges that could compound the stress associated with seeking to perform at a high level in an academically rigorous environment (Cooper et al., 2018). Black males' internalization of racial academic stereotypes is a barrier in their ability to succeed academically (Ellis et al., 2018).

Black males are less likely to enroll in or complete college than White students (D’Lima, Kinsler, & Kitsantas, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), just under one million (955,400) Black undergraduate men were enrolled in college in Fall 2013. Harper and Newman (2016) pointed to Black males’ academic transition as being a factor impacting persistence in higher education. If current attrition rates remain constant, more than 60% (636,000) of these students will not graduate from institutions of higher education within six years of enrollment (Harper & Newman, 2016).

Uwah, McMahon, and Furlow (2008) found that educational aspiration to attain a college degree had a positive correlation and predictor of academic self-efficacy. In addition, they found a positive correlation between Black males’ perceptions of school belonging and academic self-efficacy. For Black college males, most of the prevalent issues facing them are feelings of being underserved, social isolation, limited sense of belonging, cultural disconnection, and academic disengagement (Uwah, McMahon, & Furlow, 2008). These issues riddle Black college males during their time in historically White institutions (Cooper et al, 2018; Johnson et al, 2007). In addition, there is a shortage of faculty, coaches, staff, and Black students at predominantly White institutions to serve as role models (Brittain et al., 2009).

Presence of role models is a factor viewed as important for academic and social success for Black male students (Sato, Eckert, & Turner, 2018). Participation in one-on-one mentoring programs is linked to better grades, reduced school absenteeism, and reduced risky behaviors (Woodland, 2008). Mentoring provides an

opportunity for Black males to discuss the negative and positive narratives around being a Black male in America (Ellis, Rowley, Nellum, & Smith, 2015). The benefits of mentoring programs include the strengthening of positive academic identities, heightened racial and socio-cultural awareness, enhanced sense of belonging, and increased social capital (Kelly & Dixon, 2014). Black males involved in mentoring see their mentors as allies and protectors (De Royston et al., 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are disparities in access, enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates among students of color in higher education (Bowen et al., 2009). African Americans matriculate at much lower rates than White students and this difference is even more pronounced in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) (Lancaster & Xu, 2017). The disproportion is more profound for Black students in higher education. Only 36.3% of Black students enroll in higher education after completing high school, which lags behind the national average of 40.9% (American Council on Education, 2019; Kena, 2015). The national college graduation rate for all students is 60% within six-years; however, that number drops significantly to 40% for Black students. The graduation rate for Black males is 34% in the same timeframe; this percentage has remained the same for over a decade (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019,2021). Even though there have been policies to help increase access for Black male and female students, broadening and diversifying enrollment is not enough (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Harvil et al., 2012; Long, Saenz, & Tienda, 2010). More needs to be done to help Black male students complete their degrees.

In the United States, the importance of a college degree is becoming increasingly apparent (Sato, Eckert, & Turner, 2018). Black males with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely to have limited work options and earn lower wages (Wood, Harrison, & Jones, 2016). A higher education degree can lead to increased social capital and skills that can be exchanged for income in the job market and lead to health care for their family (Flores & Park, 2014; Harvey, 2008; Levein, Belfield, Muenning, & Rouse, 2007; Warren, 2016). When Black males possess less than a high school education, they are more likely to be involved with criminal activity and be incarcerated (Scott, 2015). Although education does not eliminate social inequities, Black men who move up the income ladder are less likely to be incarcerated (14%), compared to lower-income Black males (52%) (Day et al., 2018). Black males face many sociocultural, academic, and negative stressors that impact their identity and relationship within higher education. These stressors make it difficult to succeed in a collegiate setting, which impacts their educational trajectory (Bridges, 2011; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Heaven, 2015).

Pressure to conform, racial conflict, lack of support, societal isolation, and institutional racism are a few of the challenges in universities that impede on Black male graduation rates (Gonclaves & Trunk, 2014; Grier-Reed, Arcinue, & Inman, 2015; Markle, 2015). According to a study by Watt (2011), Black males find it difficult to interact with faculty, which can influence student engagement and success. Black males who find it difficult to integrate socially on campus struggle with their identity and sense of belonging (Harper & Newman, 2016).

There is little research that focuses on the Black male experience as related to the impact mentoring has on their sense of belonging and resiliency in college. Mentoring has shown to be helpful in helping Black males build a support system, whether it be academically, socially, or emotionally (Tolliver & Miller, 2018). Mentoring for Black male students has been connected with student resiliency and a sense of belonging, both factors for persisting to degree attainment. Resilience, or the capacity to rebound from or expertly adapt to adversity, threat, stress, or adversity, bolsters academic excellence (Bonner, 2014; Truebridge, 2014). Black students who have a higher sense of belonging to their school or community are more likely to have higher school efficacy (Ellis, Rowley, Nellum, & Smith, 2015). When students' sense of belonging is enhanced, their level of commitment to their academic experience is increased (Strayhorn, 2008).

Previous qualitative researchers focused on Black male experiences in higher education, retention and graduation rates, as well as persistence to degree attainment (Brooms & Davis, 2017; Lancaster & Xu, 2017; Peteet & Lige, 2016; Sato, Eckert, & Turner, 2018). The research was completed at a singular institution, usually pertaining to mentoring programs for Black males on campus (Fuentes et al., 2015; Peteet & Lige, 2016; Yomtov et al., 2017). This multi-institutional study will add to existing literature by focusing on the multiple measures of mentorship (faculty, staff, peers, family, community, employer) including its impact of the resilience and sense of belonging for Black male students in higher education. There is still more to learn about how mentoring has an impact on the resiliency and sense of belonging for all Black males on college campuses.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Black males attending a predominantly White institution of higher education have a significantly different level of resilience and belonging based upon whether they received mentoring.

## **Research Questions**

RQ1: Do Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship?

RQ2: Do Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship?

## **Hypotheses**

H1o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H1a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H2o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H2a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H3o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H3a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H4o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H4a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.



H5o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H5a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H6o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H6a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H7o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H7a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H8o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H8a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H9o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H9a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H10o: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H10a: Black men who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship.

## **Significance of the Study**

While it still appears that education is the most critical component in gaining and maintaining social mobility (Longmire-Vital & Miller-Dyce, 2013), when Black males leave higher education, they are left with limited career choices, prone to lower wages, and access to resources. According to Ron (2013), only 17% of Black males held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 36% of White males. Institutional leaders can benefit from additional research on this topic to enhance student enrollment, promote student achievement, increase retention rates, provide future career success, and create a more inclusive learning environment.

The retention of Black males does not only impact institutions, but also the policy makers. It is important to focus new and existing funding on measures and programs targeting student populations that are least likely to enroll in college, such as Black males (Harper, 2012). Harper (2012) added that several ideas may aid Black students including increasing investments in college preparation programs, addressing funding inequities that disadvantage public historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and increasing federal and state financial aid for lower-income Black male students.

Mentorship programs have been shown to be advantageous for culturally diverse students (Koplan et al., 2009). In a study of Black male college athletes at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Cooper et al. (2018) looked at the factors that plagued Black males while on campus. The results showed how the community of men in the mentoring program gave them a sense of belonging and a safe place to speak openly about their experiences through on campus mentoring program. Adult

mentoring of Black adolescent males could support their development and maintenance of racial centrality (Ellis et. al, 2015).

There is an abundance of qualitative studies on the factors of college life for minority students; there are limited studies that focus on this same group of students in terms of resiliency and sense of belonging through a quantitative lens. This study can provide the numerical data that organizations tend to lean on when making institutional-wide decisions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To better understand the impact mentoring has on the resiliency and sense of belonging for Black males attending a predominantly White institution of higher education, the study will be using Rutter's resiliency theory and Baumeister and Leary's need to belong theory.

The resilience theory is grounded in previous works from pioneer Garmezy dating back to the 1970s (Rutter, 2012). Resilience has to be viewed as a process and not as a fixed attribute to the individual (Rutter, 2012). In the early 2000s, there was an aim to emphasize the positive rather than maladaptive in which you saw the birth of the positive psychology movement by pioneers Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (Rutter, 2012). Resilience is an inference based on evidence that some individuals have a better outcome than others who have experienced a comparable level of adversity; moreover, the negative experience may have either a sensitizing effect or a strengthening "steeling" effect in relation to the response to later stress or adversity (Rutter, 2012).

Baumeister and Leary's review of the literature for a person's need to belong comes off the previous work of Donne (1975), Maslow (1968), Bowlby's (1969, 1973), and even as early as Freud (1930). Earlier theorists believed that one's sense of belonging was biological, mainly tied to the mother. Bowlby (1969) suggested that adult attachments to organizations, religious groups, or others are derived from the child's tie to the mother and revolve around personal attachment to the group leader or supervisor. Baumeister and Leary propose two main features in the theory of belonging: first, people need frequent personal contacts or interactions with others which ideally are positive or free of a negative impact and secondly, people need to perceive that there is an interpersonal relationship marked by stability, affective concern, and continuation into the foreseeable future.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were defined as follows for this study:

**Mentor:** as a person who intentionally assists your growth or connects you to opportunities for career or personal development (SES, 2018).

*Mentorship:* The relationship between mentee and mentor. The mentorship relationship will be based off the following components: 1) focused on achievement, 2) relationship is reciprocal, 3) relationship is personal, 4) mentors possess greater experience, influence and achievement, and 5) mentors take on emotional and psychological support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and role modeling (Jacobi, 1991).

*Resilience*: can be thought of as the ability to successfully cope with stressors in one's life by utilizing personal qualities to help overcome risk (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

*Persistence*: Can be defined as student's postsecondary education continuation behavior that leads to graduation (Arnold, 1999).

*Sense of Belonging*: Describes the extent to which a student perceives himself to be welcomed, valued, and respected member of the school community (Goodenow, 1992).

## Chapter 2; Literature Review

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The enrollment and graduation rate of Black males who attend post-secondary institutions is 34%, a figure far below the national average for overall males of 59% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Over 80% of Black students who enroll in post-secondary education attend a historical White college or university (Hoston et al., 2010). According to NCES (2020), the enrollment for Black students during the 2018-2019 school year, in post-secondary institutions hovered just below 13% (12.78%) which is reflective of the US census. When compared to their White male counterparts, this gap is even wider with White males' average of 61% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Only one-third of Black undergraduate men who start college graduate within six years, which is the lowest college completion rate among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups (Harper & Harris, 2012). Regardless of race or ethnicity, students who have completed a rigorous high school curriculum are more likely to have the preparation necessary to acquire the credentials that facilitate their college admission (Brown, 2011). When Black students score similarly on college entrance examinations (e.g., ACT, SAT) they are still less likely than their White counterparts to graduate with associates, bachelor's, and graduate degrees (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). In 2010, only 20% of African Americans age 25 and older had completed four years of college (Perez-Felkner, 2015); only 17% of African Americans aged 25 to 29 held a

bachelor's degree (Brown, 2011) This graduation rate is ten percentage points lower than that of Black females.

This literature review will help determine the relationship between mentorship and Black males' sense of belonging and resiliency at historically White institutions of education. It will discuss higher education enrollment, types of institutions of higher education, mentorship, resiliency, and the sense of belonging of Black males at predominantly White institutions.

### **Higher Education Enrollment**

In high schools with lower minority participation in the higher academic tracks, African American students were found to earn lower grades and enroll in four-year colleges at lower rates (Muller et al., 2010). Schools attended by underrepresented minorities tend to offer fewer resources and support than those attended by White students (Perez-Felkner, 2015). Schools that are structured in a way with academic and social resources are in affluent areas which are inaccessible to many underrepresented students (Perez-Felkner, 2015). Black students matriculate at much lower rates than their counterparts in higher education (Palmer, Maramba, & Dancy, 2012). Nationally, predominantly White institutions are approximately 11% Black with Black males comprising 35% of that demographic (Keels, 2013). According to Keels (2013), four years after enrollment, approximately 50% of White men have dropped out of higher education, compared to 69% of Black and Latino men. During the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the enrollment and graduation rates of Black males have been stagnant and, at times, even declined. There has been no improvement in the percentage of Black males attaining degrees when comparing



the graduation rates of Black men in higher education from 2003 (34%) to that of 2016 (34%) (NCES, 2019). Petet and Lige (2016) acknowledged that Black students face unique challenges in pursuing advanced degrees. Retaining and graduating Black undergraduate men at higher rates entails identifying what works in improving their classroom experience and academic outcomes (Harper & Newman, 2016).

### **Institutions of Higher Education**

There are significant differences in enrollment when comparing predominantly White institutions to historically Black colleges and universities. Test scores for entrance are generally lower at historically Black colleges and universities than those at predominantly White institutions (Golden, Bogan, Brown, Onwukwe, & Stewart, 2017). Approximately 10% of undergraduate students in colleges and universities in the United States are African American, including student-athletes (Sato, Eckert, & Turner, 2018). Though evidence shows that high-achieving low-income students have high aspirations, they continue to pursue colleges and universities that are weaker and award less financial aid than those that more advantaged students attend (Hoxby & Avery, 2012). Having reached the goal of college matriculation, Black college students are often perceived as exemplifying resilience or seen as at risk for attrition (Cross & Slater, 2004).

During the 2018-2019 school year, of the over twenty-six million college enrollees, only 1.3% (343, 734) were enrolled in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (NCES, 2020). For Black students enrolled in higher education, those enrolled in historically Black colleges and universities, dropped from 18% in 1976 to 8%, showing more students are choosing historically White institutions (NCES,

2013). Fleming (1984) reported that historically Black colleges and universities promoted intellectual and interpersonal growth and provided greater developmental opportunities for African American men better than predominantly White institutions. Allen (1992) reported that historically Black colleges and universities provided a more positive social and psychological environment for African Americans, which were conducive to students receiving better grades and having higher occupational aspirations.

Students at HBCUs are more likely to participate in the campus community than students attending PWIs because of increased perceptions of acceptance and unity among the student body (Allen, 1992).

**Campus Climate.** Racism has been a persistent impediment to the success of African American students in White college environments (Feagin et al., 1996). Black students' experiences with racism on college campuses in the form of microaggression, cultural isolation, and avoidance have physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences, which in turn can have academic consequences. Racism is seldom isolated and can be found at many sites within universities, from classrooms, and administrative offices to residential housing (McDougal et al., 2018). According to Bentley-Edwards and Chapman-Hilliard (2015), they found that Black students who attended predominantly White institutions experienced global racism stress as well as institutional and individual racism. Negotiating racism is important to African American male college students (Von Robertson & Chaney, 2015). Black male students experience a challenging climate at historically White institutions; they often perceive the campus as hostile and unwelcoming, and a

sense that society expects them to fail (Brooms, 2018; Hopkins, 1997). Racial prejudice for Black males leads to feelings of social alienation and increased subjection to disparate treatment based upon negative stereotypes; these can create a hostile university milieu that results in stress, anxiety, and poor academic performance (Fleming, 1984).

Social stereotypes of an outstanding athletic competitor, performer, and gang member often lead observers to perceive Black males as uninterested in educational achievement and success in higher education (Harris, 2018). Von Robertson and Chaney (2015) examined the impact of perceptions of stereotype threat on Black males who attended a predominantly White college. Using stereotypes as a lens, the researchers examined how Black males' knowledge of negative stereotypes about themselves may have impacted their social adjustment and ability to succeed at a predominantly White college. These societal views may shape whether Black male adolescents adopt strength-based or deficit-based orientations in what being Black in America is (Bonilla-Silva, 1997); these orientations may also influence students' educational experiences and outcomes (O' Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009).

In a qualitative study that focused on the racial and school climate, several students mentioned that having a mentor or participating in an on-campus mentoring program helped with their identity and provided them a place where they felt they could be themselves (Mwangi, Thelamour, Ezeofor, & Carpenter, 2018). The researchers also discovered that Black students felt what was happening in society was reflective of what was happening on campus. This was not the same feeling for their White counterparts who disassociated from racial issues. Strayhorn's (2011)

research suggests that one way to negotiate racial contexts is through participation in a culturally congruent religious-based organization that helped students manage race-related stress and more readily find support within their PWI campus community (as cited by Bentley-Edwards & Chapman-Hilliard, 2015).

Males are likely to leave school because of academic concerns because of their dislike for the academic environment in comparison to females (Stinebrickner & Stinebrickner, 2014). In 2018, Harris wrote a paper on how Black males engage in what is determined self-sabotaging behavior which interferes with their progress and success in college. It was determined that a saboteur is a person who exhibits a collection of cognitions and emotions that results in self-defeating patterns that negatively impact behavior to protect oneself from pain or discomfort. Black males have been affected by the idea of “acting White” (i.e. getting good grades, prefer academics over socializing) and feeling like an impostor to their community. Group pressure to conform encourages high-achieving males to follow masculine norms that do not necessarily align with academic interests (Harris, 2018). Through a four-week transition program that helped Black males in the process of transitioning into upper-class status and to help connect their masculine identity along with academic prowess and competence with focusing on minimizing self-sabotaging behavior. Harris was able to discover that by using masculine norms, this allowed for the young men to conceal feelings of fear, anxiety, and other vulnerabilities related to performance. It may be helpful for Black males to re-conceptualize the idea of masculinity to decrease the need for self-sabotaging behavior that will help Black male enroll rather than drop out of higher education (Harris, 2018).

## **Student Wellness**

Campus environments do not impact students the same way across race, gender, and other dimensions of students' identities (McDougal et al., 2018). The complexity of the Black male identity in national and regional contexts has implications for educators who desire to assist Black males to form healthy identities and achieve personal and educational success (Douglas & Witherspoon Arnold, 2016). Spurgeon, and Myers (2010) sought to examine the relationship between racial identity and wellness among African American males. A key factor in the study was that the participants represented both types of institutions (historically White institutions and historically Black colleges and universities) with almost an even split (103 from historically Black colleges and universities and 100 from predominantly White institutions) that were in their junior or senior undergraduate year. Although the study found no relationship between racial identity and wellness, they did find that students from predominantly White institutions scored lower on the Creative and Social Self factors than individuals from historically Black colleges and universities. This may be due to African American males developing stronger relationships with other minorities and thus leading to a stronger sense of racial identity (Spurgeon & Meyers, 2010). In a 2009 study, Stearns et al., discovered that Black students were the only group that saw a significant decrease in interracial friendships compared with their high school years while White students saw a significant increase in their interracial friendships.

Another example is a 2014 study by Chen, Ingram, and Davis, sought to understand the relationship between African American student engagement and

student satisfaction at both historically Black colleges and universities and predominantly White institutions. Using data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NCES, 2019), researchers garnered a sample of 3,287 students from historically Black colleges and universities and 2,638 students from predominantly White institutions. For African American students in this study, having a supportive campus, proactive advisors, and formal relationships with their peers, faculty, and administrators were helpful in their academic experience. Students reporting caring and supportive relationships with teachers may be more likely to remain academically engaged in response to challenges experienced in school; when teachers do not communicate personal investment and belief in students' potential, however, students' motivation may decrease (Klem & Connell, 2004; Perez-Felkner, 2015)

### **Mentorship**

Black college students who report having caring, supportive and positive relationships with faculty contribute to healthy social and personal development may be more likely to remain academically engaged in response to school challenges (Klem & Connell, 2004; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2015). Black male students who have good relationships with White faculty members are more likely to be satisfied with the White college environment (Robertson, 1995). McDougal et al. (2018) reported that Black students felt their professors were unsupportive and unwelcoming. Effective mentoring programs empower both the mentees and mentors (Heaven, 2015), while mentors also receive an altruistic reward from pouring into the lives of younger males and growing simultaneously (Robinson & Reio, 2012). A number of institutions created Black-male centered programs as an intervention

method to support student's academic success, academic and social integration, and personal development (Brooms, 2018). African American males are more likely to be satisfied with their college experience if they are involved in student life outside of the classroom (Heaven, 2015). Heaven (2015) explained that African American males who are involved at their institutions, receiving mentorship and participating in counseling, are more likely to be successful in their academic, social, and professional endeavors. Peteet and Lige (2016) added that mentorship is instrumental in building cultural capital in underrepresented students.

In a 2017 study, Golden, Bogan, Brown, Onwukwe, and Stewart looked at how mentoring assists students in advancing their educational pursuits at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. They hypothesized that good mentors spend time getting to know their students. They found that students who felt supported by faculty were more likely to persist in college. Consistent with this research, the Higher Education Act policy has provided funding to historically Black colleges and universities for appropriate resources such as mentoring students (Harper et al., 2012).

**Mentoring for Black males.** Mentoring programs are an invaluable service to African American students (Johnson, 2013). It was discovered in a 2015 Gallup Poll that Black males who attended a historically Black college and university were twice as likely as those attending historically White institutions to feel cared for by faculty, were excited about learning because of interactions with faculty and being encouraged to attain goals by their (Golden, Bogan, Brown, Onwukwe, & Stewart, 2017). Good faculty-student relationships are important to the success of African

American students (Love, 2008-Johnson 2013). Eagan and colleagues (2011) noted that students entering college with high degree aspirations were more likely to develop mentoring relationships with faculty; mentoring relationships are important for African American students (Guiffrida, 2006).

Establishing a mentoring relationship with a faculty member can be perceived as one of the most important relationships that a student can form in college (Allen & Eby, 2007). For Black student-athletes, having role models is important for academic, social, and athletic success as well as retention Sato, Eckert, & Turner, 2018). An older study by Mayo, Murguia, and Padilla (1995) involving over 1,200 college students found that the correlation between frequency of out-of-class contact with faculty and grade point average was strongest for African-American students compared to their White counterparts. Additionally, Allen (1992) noted that students who have a good relationship with faculty and had good grades in high school usually accomplished higher levels of academic achievement in college.

Golden, Bogan, Brown, Onwukwe, and Stewart (2017) suggested that effective mentoring of students of color requires more than extra advising. Charleston, Gilbert, Escobar, and Jackson (2014) concluded that formal and informal avenues for mentorship provide important environmental conditions for success among African American students and that, as a result, positive environmental conditions fostered by multifaceted mentorship should be more prevalent during the educational process. Mentoring that occurs at historically Black colleges and universities is a significant factor in equipping motivated students, regardless of their



backgrounds, with the tools needed for success in the workforce and for advanced educational pursuits (Golden, Bogan, Brown, Onwukwe, & Stewart, 2017).

Cooper, Corral, Macaulay, Cooper, Nwadike, and Mallery (2019) studied the impact that culturally relevant holistic development support programs had on Black male athletes who attended a predominantly White institution. The study highlighted that student-athletes who participated in the program benefitted from connecting with peers who could empathize with their stance from racial, cultural, gender, and athletic standpoints.

Yomtov, Plunkett, Efrat, and Marin (2017) noted that participants in the study reported formal and informal mentoring relationships as instrumental to their college adjustment. Students indicated that their mentor provided practical advice and direction that permitted them to effectively negotiate all aspects of college life. Interpersonal relationships and in-class experiences contributed to the overall campus climate (Brooms, 2018).

Although much of the research has focused on undergraduate programs, mentoring can be beneficial for graduate students as well (Griffin, 2012). Griffin's study wanted to focus on the 'others' involved in the student-faculty relationship; the professors. Though there is a need for mentorship in undergraduate work, there is a greater need in post-graduate degrees as well. Many African American doctoral students progress towards degree completion wrought with obstacles (Felder, 2010). African Americans who press towards doctoral degree attainment may find it difficult to find the right faculty adviser (Felder, 2010).

### **Sense of Belonging**

Finding a sense of community and belonging on campus enables Black males to grow as students and campus contributors. According to Thomas et al. (2014), students who reported having a strong sense of belonging have been linked to higher grades, higher academic motivation, higher completion rates, and student persistence. They added that one important factor that influences a student's sense of belonging is the campus racial climate. A positive campus climate is evidenced by the academic, social, and financial support provided to the students who are attending. Additionally, perceptions of the campus racial climate are influenced by student's interactions with peers from other racial/ethnic groups. Social integration for minority students occurs through more formal associations like involvement in out-of-class organizations (Thomas, Wolters, Horn, & Kennedy, 2014).

A lack of cultural identity or exposure was more likely among students who have been educated in predominantly White settings (Golden et al., 2017). African American students can be involved with activities and organizations outside of class; they often join organizations that are established to support their particular affinity group (Thomas, Wolters, Horn, & Kennedy, 2014). Black students often find support by creating and joining communities and networks such as African/Black Student Unions (BSUs), Black Culture/Student Center, Black residence communities, and Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs); these organizations have had positive influences on Black student success (Patton, Bridges, & Flower, 2011). Sato, Eckert, and Turner (2018) conducted a study of Black student-athletes from a predominantly White institution. The Black student-athletes often perceived other students' (including teammates) negative perceptions and/or overheard comments, or have

experienced racial discrimination within their athletic teams and classrooms at universities (e.g., that they were academically inferior, had a lower grade point average). Ellis, Rowley, Nellum, and Smith (2018) concluded that Black male adolescents' endorsement of being Black as a central part of their identity and having a strong sense of belonging and attachment to other Blacks in their school or community were positive predictors of their school efficacy.

Brooms' (2018) qualitative study focused on 40 Black male students at two different institutions regarding their engagement and experiences in a program called Black Male Initiatives. Four themes emerged with one focused on a sense of belonging. Students proclaimed the program offered them a safe space and allowed them to connect with other Black males (students and institutional agents) that helped them develop a community on campus. College friendships influence their sense of belonging on campus and their engagement in organizations that support their academic and social development (Azmitia et al., 2013). Ethnic minority friends were together through shared discussions around racial issues and shared activities that supported their ethnic identity exploration (Kae & Joyner, 2004). The Black Male Initiative program helped participants establish connections with faculty, staff, and administrators (Brooms, 2018).

Black STEM students encounter adverse psychological experiences that result from negative stereotypes, depicting Black students as less competent in the sciences (Perna et al., 2009). Tinto (2006) argued that students need to feel a certain level of social connection with on-campus peers, faculty, advisors, and service staff to persist in college and graduate on time. Astin's (1975) study of African American college

dropouts found that alienation and a sense of isolation were precursors to student departure. Chism and Satcher (1998) concluded that African American students at predominantly White institutions experience barriers to their academic success resulting from a greater sense of isolation and alienation and a perceived lack of support from faculty. Komarruju et al. (2010) review indicated that the interactions that occur outside of the classroom between students and faculty play a significant role in the campus culture. African American students benefit from educationally purposeful activities such as doing reading for class, asking questions, meeting with professors to discuss grades, and working with students on projects (Kuh et al., 2008; Shappie & Debb, 2017).

Additionally, Card and Luke (2018) performed a study to understand the impact of faculty validation on male students of color at a community college in California. For the study, validation was defined as “enable, confirming, and supportive process”; belonging was defined as a student’s feeling of support and the sense of one’s rightful place in an academic setting. Their results revealed that regardless of race, students who received more validation from faculty had a greater sense of belonging. Also, it was discovered that faculty, through validation, can lead to a greater sense of belonging and engagement on campus (Card & Luke, 2019).

In a 2013 study, Keels examined whether gender, race or ethnicity, and socioeconomic status combined to affect college outcomes for students. The participants were chosen from 24 selective predominantly White institutions. A unique characteristic was that all participants maintained at least a 3.0-grade point average during the fall term of freshman year. An important finding was that only

48% of Blacks graduated within four years of enrolling and 73% within six years. Though the number is higher than the national average, Black males were still less likely to graduate when compared to their female counterparts and also Latino men. Students' out-of-classroom experiences and on-campus social networks were positively and significantly associated with helping students gain a sense of belonging (Keels, 2013).

### **Resilience**

Resilience can be thought of as the ability to successfully cope with stressors in one's life by utilizing personal qualities to help overcome risk (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Resilience in higher education – is defined in general as the ability of learners 'to recover rapidly from difficult situations' as well as 'the capacity to endure ongoing hardship' (Walker et al., 2006, 251). Applied to higher education, resilience relates to those components that allow a student to achieve and persevere toward degree completion, despite non-academic obstacles that interfere with academic success (Bryan, 2005; Kim & Hargrove, 2013). Resilient individuals tend to thrive in the face of adversity and experience positive outcomes in otherwise overwhelmingly distressful situations (Hartley, 2012).

Black male students face a set of challenges within educational settings that no amount of "grit" --- "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007, p.1087) can erase. They must contend with the stress of having to deal with overt racism and microaggressions within campus settings (Jack, 2019) and defend their work, contribution, and even presence in academia (Fries-Britt, 2017). Those who persist, cope. Resilience, then, may be seen as the successful use of coping

strategies in order to proceed toward a goal. Rather than a static, individual attribute, though, resilience is a dynamic process shaped by the interplay between environment, external factors and/or the individual (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013). Institutions need to be proactive in developing and incorporating programming that is capable of instilling hope and optimism, and an overall sense of support, early on during the student's freshman year (Feldman, Davidson, & Margalit, 2014). Students who enter college with a stronger ability to adapt, cope with, and be flexible to the rigors of college-level requirements related to critical thinking and general life-stage transitioning, will be better equipped with the tools to persevere to their undergraduate degree (Debb et al., 2018).

### **Persistence**

Persistence can be defined as a student's postsecondary education continuation behavior that leads to graduation (Arnold, 1999). Resilience is positively associated with students' persistence and retention (Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007; Stuber, 2011). Research on college student persistence has been heavily influenced by the work of Vincent Tinto. Tinto's (1975) theory of student departure described the college dropout process as a longitudinal process that involves interactions between the individual and the academic and social systems of the college. Although issues of persistence and retention affect all students, African-American students, in particular, are at greater risk than White students for dropping out of college (Tinto, 1993).

Tinto (1993) theorized that student persistence was heavily influenced by how well a student integrated within their institution's academic and social structure. His

theory posited that college students whose norms, values, and ideas align within the institution they are attending are more likely to become academically and socially integrated into college, which is most directly related to his or her continuance in that college.

**Persistence for Black Males.** Empirical studies have shown that goal commitment and certainty of purpose contribute to college students' persistence (Hill, Burrow, & Bronk, 2016). African Americans are at greater risk than White students for dropping out of college (Tinto, 1993). In a study involving 46 African-American students who did not persist at a large, predominantly White university, Sailes (1993) found that racial tension and perceived hostility from the university environment were the main reasons for non-persistence. Gloria, Kurpius, Hamilton, and Wilson (1999) found that African-American college students perceived predominantly White colleges more negatively than their White counterparts. Additionally, Hausmann et al., (2007) found that peer support was a significant factor in increasing African-Americans' sense of belonging over time. Mackay and Kuh (1994) found that when African American male college students experience warmer institutional climates, they experience greater satisfaction with college, better adjustment to the college environment, and more willingness to persist through graduation.

A 2017 study by Brooms and Davis, it was reported that peer bonding and faculty mentors helped Black males persist on the campus of historically White institutions. To gain more understanding, three institutions were used to find similarities in student experiences. What they discovered is that bonding with their Black male peers provided them with a critical social support network that helped

develop and reaffirm their community on campus. Also, mentoring from Black faculty members enhanced the capital at the students' disposal so they were able to navigate and negotiate the campus more effectively, but also so that they were better prepared for life after college. It was noted that Black males develop stronger relationships on campus and how those relationships matter in their collegiate experience can be critical to their ability to persist.

Relationships with faculty are very important to the success of African American students at predominately White institutions (Love, 2008). BMI programs have been found to serve a critical role in supporting Black males' retention and persistence efforts, providing a home space where they could develop close-knit bonds, and garnering academic and social support (Brooms, 2017, 2018). Student involvement with faculty in the form of a mentoring relationship, the perception of faculty commitment and behavior, and the presence of faculty diversity can serve as motivating factors in negotiating major barriers to degree completion (Felder, 2010).



## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This study utilized a quantitative methodology to determine the level and direction of the relationship between male Black college students' participation in a mentoring relationship while attending predominantly White institutions and their resiliency and sense of belonging. The researcher analyzed if there is a significant difference in students' resiliency and sense of belonging (the dependent variables) by whether or not they engaged in a mentoring relationship (faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional staff, employer, community member, and peer—the independent variable).

### **Philosophy and Justification**

All the participants in this study were students who in 2018 attended large universities located in several areas of the United States. Participants were enrolled during the 2017-2018 academic year and ranged from freshman to senior.

This study used the quantitative design, more specifically used a survey. The purpose of this study was to determine whether Black men attending a predominantly White institution of higher education have a significantly different level of resilience and belonging based upon whether they received mentoring. More specifically, if mentorship had impacted their resiliency and sense of belonging at their institution.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To better understand the impact mentoring has on the resiliency and sense of belonging for Black males attending a predominantly White institution of higher

education, the study will be using Rutter's resiliency theory (2012) and Baumeister and Leary's need to belong theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

The Resilience Theory is grounded in previous works from pioneer Garmezy dating back to the 1970s (Rutter, 2012). Resilience has to be viewed as a process and not as a fixed attribute to the individual (Rutter, 2012). In the early 2000s, there was an aim to emphasize the positive rather than maladaptive in which you saw the birth of the positive psychology movement by pioneers Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (Rutter, 2012). Resilience is an inference based on evidence that some individuals have a better outcome than others who have experienced a comparable level of adversity; moreover, the negative experience may have either a sensitizing effect or a strengthening "steeling" effect in relation to the response to later stress or adversity (Rutter, 2012).

Baumeister and Leary's review of the literature for a person's need to belong comes off the previous work of Donne (1975), Maslow (1968), Bowlby (1969, 1973), and even as early as Freud (1930). Baumeister and Leary propose two main features in the theory of belonging: first, people need frequent personal contacts or interactions with others which ideally are positive or free of a negative impact and secondly, people need to perceive that there is an interpersonal relationship marked by stability, affective concern, and continuation into the foreseeable future (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Earlier theorists believed that one's sense of belonging was biological, mainly tied to the mother.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: Do Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship?

RQ2: Do Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship?

### **Hypotheses**

H1o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H1a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H2o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or students affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H2a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or students affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H3o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H3a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H4o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H4a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H5o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H5a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H6o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H6a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H7o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H7a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H8o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H8a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H9o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H9a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H10o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have no significant (.05) level sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

H10a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White higher education institutions have a significant (.05) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship.

### **Variables**

The independent variable for this study was mentoring relationships (faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional staff, employer, community member, and peer). The dependent variables were resiliency and sense of belonging.

### **Independent Measures.**

A mentor is defined as a person who intentionally assists one's growth or connects them to opportunities for career or personal development. On the SES survey, to determine if a student received mentoring, they selected (1=No and 2=Yes) for having been mentored by the following individuals: faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional staff, employer, community member (not employer), parent/guardian, or other student.

**Dependent measures.** The dependent measure included students' resilience and sense of belonging. The survey will measure students' resilience through the 10-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10) (Campbell-Sills, Forde, & Stein, 2009; Connor & Davidson, 2003), which has high reliability and validity (Gonzalez, Moore, Newton, & Galli, 2016). On the CD-RISC-10 scale, students rated their agreement (1 = not at all to 5 = true nearly all of the time) to items like "I am able to adapt when changes occur" and "I can deal with whatever comes my way." The survey will measure students' sense of belonging through three items (e.g., "I feel I belong on this campus") scaled 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

### **Setting and Participants**

The criterion for the host site in this study were to be a member of the Coalition Researchers Network (a pseudonym), which was an active member of the Student Experience Survey (SES) school member during the 2017-2018 school year. The SES is used as the instrumentation that was administered to participants attending institutions from the Coalition Researchers Network during the testing window from January to April 2018. Participants were contacted via email to participate in the study. All students attending the host site were allowed to voluntarily participate in

the survey, but the final sample only contained participants who were identified as a male and identified as Black or African American.

The criterion for participants in the sample were:

1. Currently enrolled in host university as either part or full-time status.
2. Identify as Black or African American.
3. Identify as male.

### **Instrumentation/Protocol**

This study used secondary data from the Student Experience Survey (SES) survey results from the most recent 2018 collection. The author in this study was able to gain access data via a relationship with a university member. The SES survey generates over 400 items and scales with subcategories. The study focused on the category of environment with the subcategories of resiliency and sense of belonging.

The survey was conducted by the host institution provided through membership of The Student Experience Survey (SES). The SES was initially conceived as a means to enhance institutional practice by better aligning the theory–research–practice cycle. A team of colleagues at the University of Maryland recognized the significant gaps between theory and research as well as research and practice in the current paradigm of college student leadership development. The SES emerged as a means to specifically address questions regarding students’ educational needs and to identify elements of the higher education environment that contributed most significantly to college students’ leadership outcomes.

The first iteration of the SES study was administered in the spring of 2006 and included more than 60,000 participants across 52 institutions of higher education in



the United States ((Student Experience Survey, 2019). Data collection occurred again in 2009, 2010, and 2011. In 2012, the SES moved to a three-year data collection format (2012, 2015, 2018) as a means to enhance institutions' usage of findings and more purposefully shape the survey instrument and subsequent contributions to literature (Student Experience Survey, 2019). The 2017-2018 cohort is the most recently published by the SES.

### **Sample**

The sample for the study was accessed by the researcher through their relationship with a member school employee. The employee has received approval to make information available to the researcher. A cross-sectional study was used as it collected data from a point in time, normally a short period of time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample that was used for this study was from the 2018 cohort of the Student Experience Survey administered to students at one institution located in the Midwest of the United States. Participating schools of the SES varied in size, location, mission, Carnegie classification, and student demographics. The data set was chosen through the process of identifying independent variables (faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional staff, employer, community member ([not employer], or peer) and dependent variables [resilience and sense of belonging] chosen through aggregating of data (Student Experience Survey, 2019).

In the 2018 data set of the member school, there were 5,282 students who participated in the Student Experience Survey. The sub-population of Black or African American students represented 337 of the respondents which made up 6.4%

of the overall sample. The final sample size for the study will consist of 103 males who have identified themselves as Black or African American. The sample was reduced because only 103 Black males responded to items about their participation in mentorship relationships.

### **Data Collection**

This study used secondary data from the main SES dataset obtained by the Coalition Researchers Network. The main data set is housed in the Student Experience Survey system with member schools receiving results of their institution. The dataset chosen will be utilizing the independent variable of mentor relationship (faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional, employer, community member ([not employer] and peer) and dependent variables of resiliency and sense of belonging. The data will be provided by an organization member who has been granted access to the most recent 2018 dataset. Member schools of the Coalition Researchers Network administered the survey from January to April in 2018. Each participating institution has access to their data set; the data set provided will be representing one institution from the Coalition Researchers Network.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study focused on inferential statistics that investigated the relationship between the independent variables (faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional, employer, community member [not employer] and another student) and dependent variables (resiliency and sense of belonging) through the use of an independent-sample *t*-test. The sample included both those who have and have not received mentoring. Inferential statistics allowed

for researchers to use a sample from a population, which helps researchers draw inferences about effects of sampling errors on results described with descriptive statistics (Orcher, 2014; Patten, 2014).

In order to process and statistically analyze the data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used. A *t*-test was used, which allows comparison of students who participated and who did not participate in mentoring and the effect it had on a Black college male's resilience and sense of belonging.

### **Limitations**

This study used secondary data from the Student Experience Survey. The survey is meant for higher education leaders to address questions regarding students' educational needs and to identify elements of the higher education environment that contributed most significantly to leadership outcomes (Multi-Institutional Survey of Leadership, 2020). Self-reporting has a weakness as the participant's perception does not necessarily match reality (Muijs, 2011). Students having "choice" in completing the survey had an effect on the overall sample size that was included in the data set. Moreover, results do not include students who may have unenrolled before the study. This can cause bias in the sample. Biased sampling is any procedure for drawing a sample that gives some types of individuals a greater chance of being included in the sample than other types (Orcher, 2014).

### **Delimitations**

As this study used archival data, there are delimitations that must be noted. Data only makes use of member schools who participated in 2018 (schools have the option of being used each testing cycle, which is conducted every three years). -The

data represented only one institution located in the Midwest region of the United States. Students who had withdrawn from school in the first semester were not eligible for the study. Students who participated were put into a drawing in which five students were drawn and won a \$100 gift card.

### **Ethical Issues**

When performing a study that uses human subjects, the researcher has the obligation to ensure no physical or psychological harm will come to participants (Orcher, 2014). As stated in the original Belmont Report (1979), the three core principles when using human subjects for a study are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Participants for this study will be chosen based upon a specific criterion.

The participants selected for this study were chosen based upon their relationship to the problem of the study. The intended purpose of the SES survey was for leadership personnel in higher education as a means to enhance institutional practice by aligning the theory-research-practice cycle (Student Experience Survey, 2019). SES emerged as a means to specifically address questions regarding students' educational needs. The original dataset was collected with a different purpose than that of the intended study. Participant information will be held separately from the data gathered. In the proposal process, student identifiers will be kept by both the member school the Student Experience Survey organization, which has the main data set. Data is confidential and will only be used for this study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Black males attending a historically White institution of higher education have a significantly different level of resilience and sense of belonging based upon whether or not they received mentoring.

For the study, resilience was measured using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10). This is the reduced version of the original scale which has 25 items. On the scale, participants rated their agreement (from 1 = not at all to 5 = true nearly all the time) to items like “ I am able to adapt when changes occur” and “ I can deal with whatever comes my way.”

The study measured participants’ sense of belonging using three items. Participants rated their agreement (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Participants answered items such as “I feel accepted as a part of the campus community” and “I feel I belong on campus.”

(Add SES Members demographics here)

There were 5, 282 participants in the original set from the institution. Those who identified as Black or African American made up only 6.4% (337) of overall participants. The final sample size for this study consisted of 103 participants who met the requirements of 1) identifying as male, 2) identifying as Black or African American, and 3) enrolled as a full-time student. Participants self-reported whether they received mentoring or not. Following the administration of the survey, the levels of resilience and sense of belonging were compared across the type of mentoring relationship.

The survey results were processed and analyzed utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A *t*-test was used, which allowed for a comparison of students who participated and those who did not participate in mentoring and the effect it had on resilience and sense of belonging for Black college males..

In the 2018 main data set of member schools, there were 5,282 students that participated in the study. The sub-population of the study who identified themselves as Black or African American represented 337 of the respondents, which made up 6.4% of the overall sample. The final sample consisted of 103 respondents who identified themselves as Black males who have participated in a mentorship relationship.

### **Research Question One**

Do Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employer, community member, or other students at Historically White Institutions of higher education, have a significantly different level of resilience compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship?

The null hypotheses for research question one were:

H1o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H2o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professionals at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H3o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H4o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H5o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with another student at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

The alternative hypotheses for research question one were:

H1a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H2a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professionals at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H3a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H4a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H5a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with another student at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

### **Research Question Two**

Do Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employer, community member, or other students at Historically White Institutions of higher education have a significantly different level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship?

The null hypotheses for research question two were:

H1o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H2o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an academic or student affairs professional staff at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H3o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H4o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with community member (not employer) at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.



H5o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with other another student at Historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

The alternative hypotheses for research question two were:

H1a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H2a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or academic or student affairs professional at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H3a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H4a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

H5a: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with other another student at Historically White Institutions have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

A *t*-test was completed between students' responses to whether they received mentorship or not with resiliency. The sample size and alpha level used to test correlation significance was  $p < 0.05$ , meaning there would be less than a 5% chance

of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis. The independent variable for this study was mentorship, while the dependent variables were resiliency and a sense of belonging.

The final sample size for the study was 103. In the final results, there is a difference in total responses for each statement, as some results were deemed missing. Question one asked: "Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people: Faculty/Instructors?" Results showed that 52 respondents answered "yes" and 50 responded "no." Question two asked: "Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people: Academic or Student Affairs Professional Staff?" Results showed that 50 respondents answered "yes," and 54 responded "no." Question three asked: "Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people: Employer?" Results showed that 44 respondents answered "yes," and 60 responded "no." Question four asked: "Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people: Community Member (not your employer)?" Results showed that 70 respondents answered "yes," and 32 responded "no." Lastly, Question five asked: "Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people: Other Student?" Results showed that 56 respondents answered "yes," and 45 responded "no."

## **Results**

The null hypothesis (H1o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher

education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H1a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.795 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.429. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H2o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level resiliency compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H2a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.754 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.453. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H3o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H3a) was Black males

who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 0.667 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.507. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H4o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level resiliency compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H4a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.652 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.516. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H5o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level resiliency compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H5a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males

who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.375 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.709. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H1o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H1a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 1.082 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.282. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H2o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs staff at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H2a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 2.448 and Sig. (2-tailed)

was 0.016. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was rejected.

The null hypothesis (H3o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H3a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 0.438 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.662. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H4o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H4a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was .1.404 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.163. These results are deemed statistically significant. The null hypothesis was rejected.

The null hypothesis (H5o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H5a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 0.708 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.481. These results are deemed statistically significant. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 1

*Mentorship Relationships and Findings*

Mentorship Relationship	T-test Resiliency	T-test Sense of Belonging	Sig (2-tailed) Resiliency	Sig (2-tailed) Sense of Belonging
Faculty/Instructor - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.0795	1.082	.429	.282
Academic or Student Affairs Professional Staff - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.754	2.448	.453	.016
Employer - Since you started at your current college/university, have you	0.667	0.438	.507	.662

been mentored by the following types of people?				
Community Member (not your employer) - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.652	1.404	.516	.163
Other Student - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-.0375	0.708	.709	.481

Table 2

*Research Question1 Hypotheses*

*Outcomes*

Hypotheses	Outcome
H1o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis
H2o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professionals at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis
H3o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis



H4o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis
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H5o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis
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Table 3

*Research Question 2 Hypotheses*

*Outcomes*

Null Hypothesis	Outcome
H1o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis
H2o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Null Hypothesis Rejected
H3o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with their employer at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis

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H4o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with community member (not employer) at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

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Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis

H5o: Black males who have a mentorship relationship with other students at historically White Institutions have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentor relationship.

Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Overview of the Study**

This study aimed to determine whether Black men attending a predominantly White institution of higher education have a significantly different level of resilience and belonging based upon whether they received mentoring.

A cross-sectional study was used as it collected data from a point in time, normally a short period of time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample that was used for this study was from the 2018 cohort of the Student Experience Survey administered to students across 14 universities that are located in the Midwest and one on the East coast of the United States.

In the 2018 main data set of member schools, there were 5,282 students who participated in representing the 14 universities in the Coalition Researchers Network (pseudonym). The sub-population of Black or African American students represented 337 of the respondents who made up 6.4% of the overall sample. The final sample size for the study consisted of 103 males who have identified themselves as Black or African American. The sample was reduced because only 103 Black males responded to items about their participation in mentorship relationships.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Black men attending a predominantly White institution of higher education have a significantly different level of resilience and belonging based upon whether they received mentoring.

## Research Questions

- RQ1: Do Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship?
- RQ2: Do Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship?

This study used two independent variables (resiliency and sense of belonging). Each of the variables had five alternative and five null hypotheses (10 per variable) proposed within the study. Each of the null hypotheses were rejected (20 in total).

There were 5, 282 participants in the original set from the institution. Those who identified as Black or African American made up only 6.4% (337) of overall participants. The final sample size for this study consisted of 103 participants who met the requirements of 1) identifying as male, 2) identifying as Black or African American, and 3) enrolled as a full-time student.

This study used secondary data from the Student Experience Survey (SES) survey results from the most recent 2018 collection. The sample for the study will be accessed by the researcher through their relationship with a member school employee.

For the study, resilience was measured using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10). This is the reduced version of the original scale which has 25 items. On the scale, participants rated their agreement (from 1= not at all to 5=true nearly all the time) to items like “ I am able to adapt when changes occur” and “ I can deal with whatever comes my way.”

The study measured participants’ sense of belonging using three items. Participants rated their agreement (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Participants answered items such as “I feel accepted as a part of the campus community” and “I feel I belong on campus.”

### **Limitations**

This study used secondary data from the Student Experience Survey. The survey is meant for higher education leaders to address questions regarding students’ educational needs and to identify elements of the higher education environment that contributed most significantly to leadership outcomes (Multi-Institutional Survey of Leadership, 2020).

Self-reporting has a weakness as the participant’s perception does not necessarily match reality (Muijs, 2011). Students having “choice” in completing the survey had an effect on the overall sample size that will be included in the data set.

Moreover, results do not include students who may have unenrolled before the study. This can cause bias in the sample. Biased sampling is any procedure for drawing a sample that gives some types of individuals a greater chance of being included in the sample than other types (Orcher, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

### **Research question one.**

Do Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a significantly different level of resiliency compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship?

In the original study, there were 5,282 students overall who participated. The sub-population of Black or African American students represented 337 of the respondents, which made up 6.4% of the overall sample. The final sample size for the study consisted of 103 males who have identified themselves as Black or African American.

A *t*-test was performed to determine the significance, if any, that mentorship relationship had on Black male's resiliency with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or another student. The *t*-test found that each of the mentor relationships (faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or another student) did yield a statistically significant level. The level of significance was set to .05%. This means that a result would be considered significant if it is less than the .05%. Table 2 below shows the results from the *t*-test for resiliency.

Table 4  
*T-Test Results for Resiliency and Mentorship Relationship*

Mentorship Relationship	<i>t</i> -test Resiliency
Faculty/Instructor - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.795
Academic or Student Affairs Professional Staff - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.754
Employer - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	0.667
Community Member (not your employer) - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.652
Other Student - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	-0.375

The null hypothesis (H1o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H1a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the *t*-test was -0.795 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.429. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H2o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level resiliency compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H2a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional staff at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.754 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.453. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H3o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H3a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 0.667 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.507. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H4o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White



institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level resiliency compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H4a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.652 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.516. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H5o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level resiliency compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H5a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of resiliency compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was -0.375 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.709. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

#### **Research question two.**

Do Black men who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or other students at predominantly White higher education institutions have a

significantly different sense of belonging compared to Black men who do not have a mentorship relationship?

A *t*-test was performed to determine the significance, if any, that a mentorship relationship had on Black male’s sense of belonging with faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or another student. The *t*-test found that each of the mentor relationships (faculty or instructors, academic or student affairs professional staff, employers, community members, or another student) did yield a statistically significant level. The level of significance was set to .05%. This means that a result would be considered significant if it is less than the .05%. Table 4 below shows the results from the *t*-test for sense of belonging. These results were consistent with previous result that Black males reported higher level of sense of belonging with having diverse relationships on campus (Card & Wood, 2019; Strayhorn, 2008). Black males reported that when they feel unsupported and unwelcomed on campus by peers and staff members, it impacts their educational experience (McDougal et al., 2018).

Table 5

*T-Test Results for Sense of Belonging and Mentorship Relationship*

Mentorship Relationship	<i>t</i> -test Sense of Belonging
Faculty/Instructor - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	.511
Academic or Student Affairs Professional Staff - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	.301

Employer - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	.880
Community Member (not your employer) - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	.222
Other Student - Since you started at your current college/university, have you been mentored by the following types of people?	.821

The null hypothesis (H1o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H1a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with faculty or instructors at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 1.082 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.282. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H2o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs staff at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H2a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with academic or student affairs professional at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do

not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 2.448 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.016. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was rejected.

The null hypothesis (H3o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H3a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with an employer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 0.438 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.662. These results are deemed statistically insignificant. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

The null hypothesis (H4o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H4a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a community member (not employer) at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was .1.404 and

Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.163. These results are deemed statistically significant. The null hypothesis was rejected.

The null hypothesis (H5o) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have no significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alternative hypothesis (H5a) was Black males who have a mentorship relationship with a peer at historically White institutions of higher education have a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of sense of belonging compared to Black males who do not have a mentorship relationship. The alpha level used to test the significance of the relationship was  $p < 0.05$ . For this test, the t-test was 0.708 and Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.481. These results are deemed statistically significant. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Data analysis found that having a mentorship relationship for Black males at historically White higher education institutions had a significantly different level of resiliency and sense of belonging. Previous research has focused on qualitative data aligned with this quantitative study's results.

Previous research gave hope that mentoring would impact Black males but it was not clear if it led to resiliency and a sense of belonging at historically White institutions. The results from the study showed that in terms of resiliency, a mentoring relationship with an academic or student affairs professional staff member had the greatest impact. This was followed by a mentoring relationship with another student, community member (not employer), employer, and faculty/instructor. Additionally, the mentoring relationship that had the greatest impact on a Black

male's sense of belonging was an employer. This was followed by a mentoring relationship with another student, faculty/instructor, academic or student affairs professional staff, and community member. The results showed how impactful a mentoring relationship for Black males leads to resiliency and a sense of belonging as an underrepresented community. The goal is retainment that will eventually lead to graduation and establishing this type of relationship that opens up their ability to access resources and receive support towards graduation.

Graduation rates for Black males have been impacted due to low retention rates. There have been numerous barriers that impede their continuation to degree completion. Previous studies, mainly qualitative, have focused on the topic of mentorship for Black male students at historically White institutions (Daney II, 2010; Felder, 2010; Schwartz, 2011; Johnson, 2013; Wood & Newman, 2014; Smith et al., 2016). These studies have found that having these relationships, has had a positive impact on Black males' collegiate experience.

### **Recommendations for Institutions**

A recommendation for university leadership teams is to add mentorship programs or offer mentoring opportunities on campus for underrepresented students. The ability to have an individual to use as a point of reference to assist in educational and career choices, is paramount to the success of Black males. Offering mentorship can have many benefits. This can lead to an increase of Black males as part of the student body. With having more Black males, it could help improve the overall graduation rate for them from higher education that will lead to more career opportunities for them. These men will have the opportunity to be pillars in their

communities. This would not be done in isolation but an inclusive approach to have them feel a part of the campus community. This adds diversity to the campus and it allows for different perspectives and views that can be often overlooked. When there are more Black males on campus, this could lead to an increase in their graduation rate; this lends itself to having a greater impact on career choices for them. Also, this can be an opportunity for colleges and universities to have a more diversity in their hiring of professors and instructors. This is an important aspect in the retainment of Black males.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There is still a lack of research regarding Black males' resiliency and sense of belonging in regards to mentoring. As we have witnessed after the 2020 murder of George Floyd, institutions, organizations, and society play a key role in the oppression underrepresented groups in America. Resilience by the individual is not merely enough to help overcome systemic issues when it comes to education. Future research is needed to see how barriers that impede the retention of Black males' can be reduced so they have an opportunity to graduate at higher rates.

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## Appendix A: Bethel University Institutional Review Board (IRB)



**BETHEL**  
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board  
3900 Bethel Drive  
PO2322  
St. Paul, MN 55112

March 4, 2022

Derek Brown  
Bethel University  
St. Paul, MN 55112

Re: Project: *The Impact Mentoring has on Black Males' Sense of Belonging and Resiliency at Historically White Institutions of Higher Education*

Dear Derek,

On March 4, 2022, the Bethel University Level Two Institutional Review Board completed the review of your proposed study and approved the above referenced study.

Please note that this approval is limited to the project as described on the most recent Human Subjects Review Form documentation, including email correspondence. Please be reminded that it is the responsibility of the investigator(s) to bring to the attention of the IRB Committee any proposed changes in the project or activity plans, and to report to the IRB Committee any unanticipated problems that may affect the welfare of human subjects. The approval is valid until March 4, 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Craig Paulson'.

Craig Paulson, Ph.D.  
Chairperson, Bethel University Level Two IRB Committee