THE ROLE ACADEMIC STRATEGIES PLAY IN THE FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE

EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES WITH ADHD

A Scholarly Research Project

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

First-Year African American males with ADHD do not persist beyond the first year of college due to barriers experienced in PWI environments. The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological action research study with a disability critical race theory framework was to investigate the role educational strategies played in the college experience of first-year African American males with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The study examined five research questions. How do African American males with ADHD describe their first-year college experience, during the first year of college experience, what factors do African American males with ADHD see as contributing or not contributing to academic success, how often do African American male college students with ADHD request assistance for academic strategy support such as time management, tutoring support service, and test-taking strategies. For African American male college students with ADHD, what is the process for registering with a disability resource office to request academic accommodations. How often do African American male college students with ADHD visit student success centers for support? If not provided the right tools to help them persist beyond the first college year, the role academic strategies can play in the first-year college experience of African American male college students with ADHD can be harmful to their academic experience, with four themes emerging: African American male misconception, environmental transition, reluctance results in passivity and sense of belonging. Implications for practice are recommended, and limitations of the study and future research are discussed. Lastly, the limitations of the study are also addressed. Data collection is included.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to Father YAH Almighty, from whence all blessings and gifts flow. Thank you, Abba YAH, you said Yes! In addition to my late parents, Moses and Bonnie Woods Sr, Dad and Mom, your daughter did it! I also dedicate this to my wonderful, patient, supportive, loving husband, Marlon Williams Sr! You are my rock, and I love you to the core of me. You and Marlon Jr. are my heartbeats! Marlon 'MJ' William's mommy is proof that with YAH, anything is possible; continue to dream, big baby boy! Mommy is always so proud of you. To my amazing siblings Afreya, Jabari, and Akeem thank you for your unconditional love and support. Let us continue YAH's legacy. To every African American male with ADHD and any disability, your disability does not define you. It is a part of the context that makes you who you are. You will know who you are as long as you believe in yourself. I hope the study represents the many voices of African American male college students with ADHD as they navigate the college experience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

"True Identity"

*I can only accept your apologies in advance to all who have misunderstood how unique and intelligent I truly am. Unfortunately, when my teachers, professors, and my own family look at me, all they can see is my struggle with ADHD, not **my true identity**…**I challenge you today to believe in ME…***

As a male blanketed in Black skin, I am misunderstood, pre-judged, and considered less than. My values, attitude, and presence are often perceived as arrogant, intimidating, and aggressive. I feel so lonely and isolated when I walk across predominantly all-white campuses. This reality only makes my daily fight to overcome attention deficit hyperactivity disorder even more damaging to my self-image and already shattered self-esteem.

*Born with a purpose long before doctors prescribed medication. I am convinced that I am discriminated against because others have placed false labels on me, perceiving me as insignificant, holding secret, implicit biases, and masking their prejudice with an insincere smile every time I enter the classroom. I want to be FREE…to explore, be myself, and learn at my own pace. I am a human being more than capable of fulfilling my dreams. Regardless of my differences, I want to be acknowledged. **I challenge you today to believe Us.***

*We are more than a stereotype, not just another number in the crowd of your enrollment scroll. We are created in the image of the Almighty Creator YAH and his son, our Savior Yahshua. We are determined to overcome adversity even when others cannot see the best in us. Broaden your narrow-minded lenses, and maybe then clearly see **our true** identity.*

- Author and Poet Jabari Woods

Introduction

The above poem from author and poet Jabari Woods (2022) conceptualizes how many African American males with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) feel as they attempt to navigate predominately white institutions (PWIs) seeking to obtain an educational experience that is promised to all American citizens by the Constitution.

I often think about the betrayal African American males with ADHD experience as they seek to better themselves by obtaining a higher education degree. A betrayal born from systematic barriers that target African Americans is compounded by the intersectionality of race and disability (Crenshaw, 2019) and further betrayed by a society that has not historically viewed African Americans as equal (Allen, McLewis, & Harris, 2018). When considering the foundation of America, there exists a contradiction. While the concept of a democratic society exists in theory, meaning that the entrusted power is for the people, by the people (de Tocqueville, 2000), we know that many are excluded from this process.

Democracy should be inclusive, encompassing an array of diverse people, races, cultures, traditions, languages, genders, and disabilities (Connor et al., 2015). The inequities in America are never more evident than in educational access and success. When viewing a democratic society through the lens of learning, inequities in teaching and learning exist, particularly when considering race and disability. Not all teaching and learning are presented and received the same.

Background Information

As an educator with over twenty-one years of higher education experience, I know that education and learning are different from one student to the next. Historically America's education system has been a barrier for African Americans. There exists a split system based on

race and socioeconomic status. In addition, a separate layer of inequity exists for Black and brown males, particularly those with disabilities. As a disability service professional, I have seen firsthand the challenges all students with disabilities face. Especially the challenges African American males with (ADHD) experience navigating school environments (Tucker & Dixon, 2009). Predominately white colleges and universities have always faced challenges retaining African American males (Allen et al., 2018). My current PWI institution faces the same challenge regarding African American male retention (Hunn, 2014). There is a lack of tracking and data collection related to African American males with ADHD in college (Tucker & Dixon, 2009). The issue is even direr when examining the retention of first-year African American males with ADHD. Research shows gaps in the literature regarding first-year African American males with ADHD in the college environment (Banks & Hughes, 2013). Research gaps are due to the lack of interest and attention to African American males with ADHD (Frye, 2021).

Learning should be diverse and accessible to all members of society (Kampen, 2020). President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative (MBK Alliance, n.d.) and President George W. Bush II's No Child Left Behind policies were designed to provide inclusivity to every child regardless of race, class, or disability (Klein, 2015). The hope is that education will arrive at a point where learning does not look different or discriminatory from one student to the next. In this way, America can live up to its promise that everyone is created equal (de Tocqueville, 2000). Therefore, everyone deserves an equal chance at an excellent education in K-12 or higher education learning environments (de Tocqueville, 2000).

The study aimed to determine the role academic strategies played in the college experience of first-year African American males with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

(ADHD). Through phenomenological study, an attempt was made to highlight the lived experiences of this population on the campus of PWIs. This chapter introduces the study's background information, research purpose, problem statement, research questions, scholarly project, terms that will guide the study, the significance of the study, and a description of how the study's five-chapter research is organized.

Purpose Statement

My passion for African American males with ADHD derives from a desire to serve this population better. In addition, I desire that PWIs, and my PWI, learn valuable information from this population of students. Furthermore, it is hoped that based on the research, myths surrounding persons with disabilities and disorders, such as they are less than persons without disabilities, are dispelled. This research will add to the body of research regarding this population by equipping PWIs with the knowledge to improve retention among African American males with ADHD beyond the first-year college experience by improving institutional policies and practices that disproportionately affect African American male college students with ADHD.

The first-year college experience is the foundational year that sets the pathway for the remainder of college.

Problem Statement

Of the various disabilities, ADHD is more prevalent among African Americans, in particular males, than any other racial group (Rahn & Ejike, 2013). In addition, African American males are disproportionately diagnosed in later years, such as high school and college, even though they exhibit symptoms in early adolescence (Frye, 2022). Historically, African Americans are underdiagnosed and receive less treatment for ADHD symptoms than other racial groups (Cénat et al., 2020). Reviewing African Americans' history of higher education in

America provided a glimpse of the many struggles and barriers encountered by African American students, such as racial and equity barriers, discrimination, and lower socioeconomic status, which hinder receiving equal access to educational attainment (Allen et al., 2018). Furthermore, African American college students in higher education also experience social and cultural isolation while attending predominately white institutions and struggle with feeling accepted and supported (Keflezighi et al., 2016).

These barriers compromise the African American male with ADHD student's college experience (Williams, 2021). African American male college students with ADHD experience the barriers mentioned, along with disability discrimination. The impact of barriers may exacerbate the college experience for African American male college students with ADHD (Cénat et al., 2020). This contributes to African American males with ADHD in predominately white institutional environments not persisting beyond the first year of college (Banks & Gibson, 2016).

Research Questions

The research question, determining the role academic strategies play in the first-year college experience of African American males with ADHD, led this study. In addition, I also investigated five sub-questions: 1) How do African American males with ADHD describe the first-year college experience? 2) During the first year of the college experience, what factors do African American males with ADHD see as contributing or not contributing to academic success? 3) How often do African American males with ADHD request assistance for academic strategy support such as time management, tutoring support services, and test-taking? 4) For African American males with ADHD, what is the process for registering with a disability

resource office to request academic accommodations? 5) How often do African American males with ADHD visit student success centers for support?

Description of Terms

Academic Accommodation

In the context of higher education, academic accommodation is defined as a modification or adjustment to the task and environment or how things are done, enabling persons with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or a job (US Department of Education, 2007).

Academic/Educational Strategy

Strategies for developing learning skills, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, measure academic success (York et al., 2015).

Academic Success

This study defines academic success *as* obtaining and retaining knowledge and information through experience, incorporating data facts, utilizing educational strategies, and measuring academic achievement (York et al., 2015).

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Per the DSM5 Diagnostic Criteria, a persistent pattern of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity interferes with functioning or development (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2013). Symptoms include failure to give close attention to details and careless mistakes in academic work. Students can miss work details and lack listening when speaking directly to someone with ADHD. Students also experience difficulty-organizing tasks (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2013).

African American/Black

African American or Black is an ethnic group of persons deriving from the lineage of

Africa's continent (Jackson, 1999). Per the study context, African American or Black race identifies a specific racial group with a cultural identity tied to the continent of Africa (Jackson, 1999).

College Experience

Within higher education, the college experience is students' emotional, academic, and social connectedness within a college environment that creates a community of experiences (Jorgenson et al., 2018).

Disability

A person with a mental or physical impairment substantially limiting one or more significant life activities. Includes people who record such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their association with a person with a disability (ADATA, 2019).

Intersectionality

Related social categories define a person's many identities (Crenshaw, 2019). Race, disability, and social class intertwine the experiences a person lives (Crenshaw, 2019). **Race**

This study defines the idea of the human species being divided into distinct groups on the inherited basis of physical and behavioral differences (Smedley et al., 2020).

Predominately White Institutions

Institutions of higher learning where enrollment of non-students of color is 50% or more (Hunn, 2014).

Racial Battle Fatigue

The mental and emotional conditions a person of color feels due to continuous racial demeaning and dismissiveness (Smith, 2015).

Racial Microaggressions

Everyday slights, insults, and indignities in messages sent to persons of color by white persons who often have good intentions (Sue, 2010).

Stereotype Threat

A racial stereotype that is a socially premised psychological threat when a person, particularly of color, is in a situation where a negative stereotype about a group applies (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Significance of the Study

First-year African American males with ADHD experience significant challenges navigating the college experience (Connor et al., 2015). Often, their voices and experiences go unseen and unaccounted for. With little to no research on the first-year college experience of African American males with ADHD, the study sought to provide these students with a needed platform to allow their voices to be heard and others to view the world through their lens. In addition, the study on race, disability, and intersectionality reviewed the college campus environment (Crenshaw, 2019). The college campus environment is vital in shaping a college student's experience (Newman et al., 2015). For African American males with ADHD to be successful, an institution must understand the diversity of disabilities (Showers et al., 2017). To better assist students with disabilities, continuous research, disability knowledge, support, and advocacy needs to become a top priority in higher education (Lombardi et al., 2018). Moreover, African American male college students with ADHD will continue not to persist to graduation

beyond the first year of college (Banks & Gibson, 2016).

Summary

While mitigating their disabilities differently from one person to the next, African American males with ADHD deserve support (Frye, 2021). This study aimed to highlight first-year African American male college students with ADHD, shed light on the individual experiences of the study's participants, and focus a lens on their lived truths (Byrne, 2001). The goal and significance of the study are to help readers understand African American males with ADHD and their realities navigating the first-year college experience, in addition to explaining the role academic strategies such as time management, test-taking strategy, and accommodations play in African American males with ADHD success.

I often tell my colleagues, "A student issue is not strictly defined to disability services or the Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity. It is collaboration across campus" (Williams, 2021, p. 3). Collaboration across campus must continue so that African American males with ADHD, as all students collectively, are wholeheartedly served (Lalor et al., 2021).

Research Report Organization

The study aimed to examine the role educational strategies played in the first-year college experience of African American males with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This chapter presented the study's background, research purpose, research problem statement, research questions, definitions, and significance.

Chapter 2 will provide a detailed review of related literature and the theoretical frameworks of race and disability critical theory. Chapter 3 will review the study's research methodology and methods. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings and results of the study, and

chapter 5 will complete the study's final report by addressing limitations, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As introduced in chapter 1, first-year African American male college students with ADHD navigating the college environment face barriers to their academic success (Banks & Gibson, 2016). This chapter reports a review of the literature describing (1) disability, (2) race and disability framework, (3) ADHD, (4) first-year African American males with ADHD, and (5) barriers to first-year African American males with ADHD experience at PWIs.

Disability

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act National Network (ADATA, 2019), per the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act legislation, a person with a disability is a "person with a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more significant life activity." This included people diagnosed with such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The ADA also makes it "unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their association with a person with a disability" (ADATA, 2019, p.2). A disability can take many forms: physical, learning, and emotional (ADATA, 2019).

A learning disability can be psychological and affect speaking and seeing (ADATA, 2019). Disabilities and disorders vary from one person to the next (ADATA, 2019). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019), 80% of students attend college, and 19% identify with having a disability. Approximately, 17% of college students with disabilities are African American (NCES, 2019; See Table 1). Institutions of higher education's understanding of disabilities need to be prioritized to better serve the demographic of students with disabilities (Kim, & Aquino, 2017). In reviewing the history of higher education and disability, there is a lack of research focusing on higher education institutions' knowledge of disability and the diversity of disability (Lombardi et al., 2018). An institution that can better assist students with disabilities sees

disability as diversity (Lombardi et al., 2018). Without continuous research on viewing disability as diversity, higher education institutions will continue their lack of support and advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities (Lalor et al., 2021). In addition, institutions will continue failing students of color with varying disabilities and disorders such as ADHD, learning, physical, and emotional disabilities (Tucker & Dixon, 2009).

Table 1

Disabilities Post-Secondary Level 2015-16 IES NCES

Demographics	Percentage (%)
Total	19
Race/ethnicity	
White	20.8
Black	17.2
Hispanic	18.3
Gender	
Male	19.2
Female	19.6

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is a brain disorder that influences children and adults (Antshel et al., 2019). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2017), 11% of adults and 5% of children in the United States are impacted by the disorder. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), there are three forms of ADHD: hyperactive, inattentive, and combined (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms include inattention, lack of focus, poor time management, weak impulse, hyperactivity, and executive dysfunction (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Symptoms of ADHD vary from one adult to the next, as it does from one child to the next (Donzelli et al., 2019).

Research indicates that the cause of ADHD may be a combination of genetics and hereditary (Thapar & Evangelia, 2008). ADHD in older teenagers and adults is commonly diagnosed before age twelve (Thapar & Evangelia, 2008). However, research suggests that ADHD and disability diagnoses are not evenly distributed by race or social class (Tucker & Dixon, 2009).

Race & Disability Framework

Tucker and Dixon (2009) state that the underdiagnosis of African American males and African American male youth with ADHD is partly due to racial and social class disparities. Per the context of the current study African American is defined as an ethnic group of persons deriving from the lineage of Africa with a cultural identity tied to the customs and traditions of the continent (Jackson, 1999). Race identifies a specific ethnic group of people grouped with inherited physical and behavioral similarities (Smedley et al., 2020). African American males and youth report an ADHD diagnosis at 5.5% compared to non-African-American males at 4% (Tucker et al., 2005). Research suggests that the intersectionality of race and disability contributes to the disparities faced by African American males with ADHD and other disabilities (Crenshaw, 2019). Intersectionality was developed by critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw, who stated that "related social categories define a person's identity such as race, disability, social class, and gender intertwine the experiences a person lives" (Crenshaw, 2019, p. 25). Race, disability, and social class experiences for African American males with ADHD contribute to either fair or non-fair treatment in disability diagnosis (Cénat et al., 2020). Research indicates that African American males with varying disabilities, such as audio deficits, physical limitations, and ADHD are less likely to receive treatment (Cénat et al., 2020). In contrast, non-African American males and youth are more likely to receive fair treatment for ADHD and disability diagnoses (Cénat, 2022).

First-Year African American Male College Students and ADHD

Research suggests that African American males and the African American community are impacted by ADHD more than other communities (Rahn & Ejike, 2013). Further research indicates that adult African American and young black males display symptoms of ADHD at a young age yet are diagnosed in later high school or college years compared to other racial communities (Frye, 2022). In higher education, students with disabilities face barriers regardless of race, gender, or social class (Newman et al., 2021). Obstacles that students with disabilities have faced date back to a long history of society negatively viewing a person with a disability (Patton, 1998).

Students with disabilities face college barriers with little campus accessibility, negative attitudes, lack of assistive technology in the classroom environment, stereotypes, and lack of financial support (Houtenville et al., 2019). First-year African American male college students with ADHD face additional barriers related to their disability. In addition, they also face barriers unique to being African American males with a disability attending college at PWIs (Banks & Hughes, 2013).

Barriers for First-Year African American Male College Students with ADHD at PWIs

The first-year college experience contributes to most African American male college students with ADHD. They are not persisting beyond the first year. (Banks & Gibson, 2016). Due to barriers of stereotype threats, racial microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue experienced during the first-year, African American male college students with ADHD find it hard to navigate the college experience while attending school at PWIs (Banks & Hughes, 2013). PWIs are institutions of higher learning where enrollment of non-students of color is 50% or more (Hunn, 2014). PWIs are also known as historical white institutions and have a long-held challenge of trying to retain African American students (Hunn, 2014).

First-Year College Experience

The college experience should provide students with emotional, academic, and social connectedness in a college environment that creates a community of experiences (Jorgenson et al., 2018). Colleges and universities, especially PWIs, should work to create a cultural campus environment that is inclusive to all students (Williams, 2021). Inclusivity on college campuses must be inclusive for all students with disabilities, including students of color with disabilities (Kim et al., 2017). Derrick Broom's (2018) study, "' Building Us Up': Supporting Black Male College Students in a Black Male Initiative Program," suggests that negative college and university campus climates can damage African American males at PWIs with barriers such as stereotype threat. Other barriers at PWIs also include racial microaggressions and racial battle fatigue. Research finds that "environments where African American male college students experience racial stereotype threat, racial microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue have a deleterious psychological influence on their success" (Strayhorn et al., 2016, p. 41)

Racial Stereotype Threat

Racial stereotype threats are socially premised psychological threats when a person, particularly of color, is in a situation where a negative stereotype about a group applies (Steele & Aronson, 1995). An example would be an African American male with ADHD being called a racial epithet and told he is less than others because he has a disability (Banks & Gibson, 2016). Too often, on PWI college campuses, African American males face predicaments where stereotype threat persists (Steele et al., 1995).

Racial Microaggressions

Racial microaggressions are everyday slights, insults, and indignities in messages sent to persons of color by white persons who often have good intentions (Sue, 2010). Racial microaggressions as a barrier influence a person's academic, emotional, and physical health (Sue,

2010). An example of a racial microaggression is dismissing a first-year African American male college student with ADHD, who, in class, attempts to bring up the barriers they face in part due to their race and disability. Dismissiveness in an educational setting of a student who mentions race, disability, or gender is a deep-rooted microaggression often happening to students of color (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Facing a continuation of racial microaggressions as an African American male college student with ADHD creates a challenging, painful experience (Strayhorn et al., 2016).

Racial Battle Fatigue

Critical race theorist Dr. William Smith developed the term 'Racial Battle Fatigue' as the mental and emotional conditions that a person of color feels due to continuous racial demeaning and dismissiveness (Smith, 2015). Racial battle fatigue on predominately white college campuses disproportionately affects students of color because they continuously experience some form of racial battle fatigue" (Smith, 2015). Research suggests African American male college students with varying disabilities such as traumatic brain injuries, ADHD, or a physical disability often experience racial battle fatigue, stereotype threat, and racial microaggressions simultaneously, which impacts their college experiences as compared to non-students of color with disabilities who are less likely to experience racial battle fatigue, and racial microaggressions (Banks & Hughes, 2013). Non-students of color with disabilities do, however, experience stereotype threats based on their disability (Banks & Gibson, 2016).

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Interconnection to the Current Study

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The outcome of the past studies is relevant to the current research in that the studies provide relevance in contextually understanding the intersectionality of race, disability, gender, and social class (Crenshaw, 2019) as it pertains to African American males with ADHD navigating a PWI environment (Banks & Hughes, 2013). In addition, the past studies provide interconnected relevance to the current research in that the first-year African American male college students with

ADHD experience relatable barriers based solely on disability, as all persons with disabilities experience (Houtenville & Boege, 2019).

However, first-year African American male college students with ADHD are disproportionately impacted by societal barriers based on their race, lower socioeconomic class, and diagnosis of ADHD; in contrast, non-persons of color are not (Tucker & Dixon, 2009). Nonetheless, there are gaps in the research as it pertains to the voices of first-year African American male college students with ADHD navigating the college experience and the role academics play in their experience missing from the body of research. The current study sought to close the gap in research.

Literature Review Summarization

The literature reviewed studies on disability, race and disability framework, ADHD, First-year African American males with ADHD, barriers to first-year African American males with ADHD experience at PWIs, and the interconnection of past studies relevant to the current research.

Chapter Summary

It was found that there is an underperformance divide within higher education among African American males, particularly those with ADHD and their college peers. Compared to their peers, African American males do not persist beyond the first year of college, particularly at predominately white institutions (Banks & Gibson, 2016). Chapter 3 will review the research methodology, methods, context, data collection, data analyses, and researcher positionality.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The study aimed to examine the role academic strategies played in the college experience of first-year African American males with ADHD. In addition, it sheds light on the voices of first-year African American male college students with ADHD. The study answered five additional research questions: 1) How do African American males with ADHD describe the first-year college experience? 2) During the first year of college, experience what factors do African American males with ADHD see as contributing or not contributing to academic success? 3) How often do African American males with ADHD request assistance for academic strategy support such as time management, tutoring support services, and test-taking? 4) For African American males with ADHD, what is the process for registering with a disability resource office to request academic accommodations? 5) How often do African American males with ADHD visit student success centers for support? This chapter will describe the research methodology, methods, including participants, data collection, analysis, and the researcher's positionality.

Research Methodology

The methodology was qualitative action research with a phenomenological/ Disability Critical Race Theory framework. The study implored semi-structured interviews with participants on participants' lived experiences.

Qualitative Methods

There are three types of research methods—qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method analysis (Mertler, 2020). Qualitative methodological studies use "narrative and observational data collection and analysis" (Mertler, 2020, p. 313). Furthermore, qualitative studies can be more difficult for researchers because they are more holistic and in-depth (Mertler, 2020). Qualitative studies utilize surveys, focus groups, and interviews to obtain participants' lived experiences of a

phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2018). In addition, qualitative studies follow more inductive reasoning than deductive reasoning (Mertler, 2020). Qualitative research includes narrative, phenomenological, ethnography, and action research (Creswell et al., 2018).

Phenomenological/DisCrit Race Theory

Qualitative action research allows the researcher to learn about a participant's problem and address the study to obtain the information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). There are five standard qualitative designs in qualitative action research (Creswell et al., 2018). I used phenomenological design. A phenomenology method allows the researcher to study individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Michelle Byrne's 2001 article, 'Understanding life experiences through a phenomenological research approach,' describes exploring phenomena as firsthand human experience (p. 831). Through phenomenology, researchers hope to gain an understanding of the essential "truths" (i.e., essences) of the lived experience (Byrne, 2001). African American male college students with ADHD are a phenomenon, and their experiences are often not discussed or researched in detail, which results in a lack of light shining on the voices of African American male college students with ADHD.

Through the phenomenological investigation, the voices of first-year African American male college students with ADHD were heard. Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) was the underlying theoretical framework for the phenomenological study. Disability Critical Race Theory explores Disability, race, class, and many other identities as intersectional contributors to a person's experiences (Annamma, Ferri, & Connor, 2018). Figure 1 below displays examples of qualitative research, and Figures 2 and 3 display quantitative and mixed-method research examples.

Figure 1

Example of Qualitative Research

In quantitative analysis, a collection of numerical data is analyzed (Mertler, 2020).

Furthermore, quantitative methodologies use more deductive reasoning than inductive (Creswell et

al., 2018). In addition, the quantitative research method involves four categories "descriptive,

correlational, group comparisons, and single-subject designs" (Mertler, 2020, p. 98). Quantitative

is used within teacher-led settings (Mertler, 2020). The mixed method combines numerical

(quantitative) and qualitative data (Mertler, 2020). A mixed-method analysis can assist a researcher

in better understanding a research problem than choosing just one methodology (Creswell et al.,

2018).

An example of mixed-method research would be a triangulation-embedded design (Mertler,

2020). In triangulation, several forms of data are related (Mertler, 2020). Triangulation is the most

used form of data collection for mixed methods. Figures 3 and 4 display examples of quantitative

and mixed method research.

Figure 2

Example of Quantitative Research
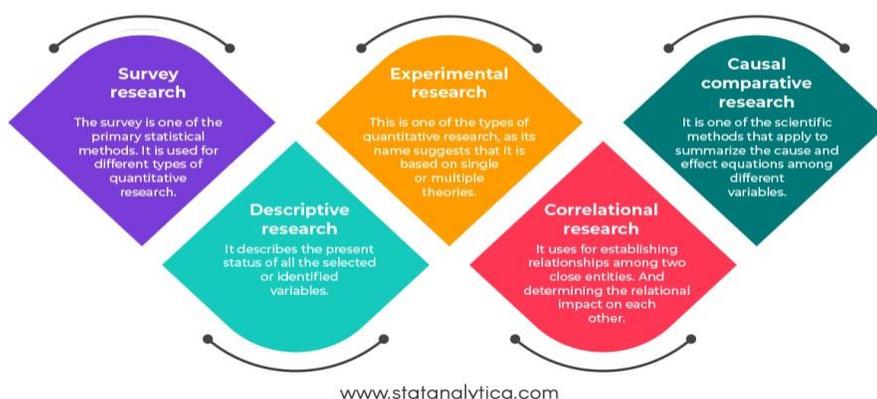
Figure 3

Examples of Mixed Methods Research
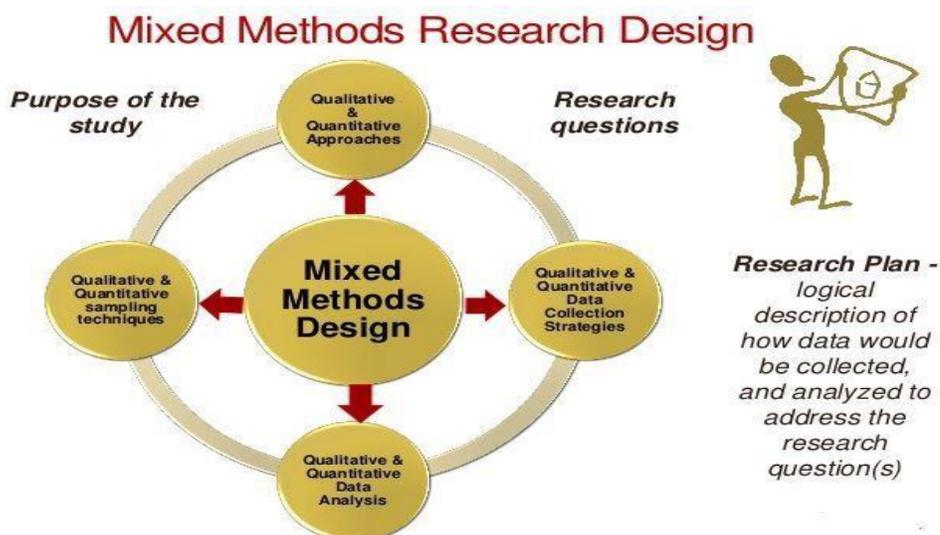
Qualitative Analysis Reasoning

This study sought to capture the lived experiences and phenomena of the research participants through narration analysis and is more inductive than deductive (Mertler, 2020). Using a qualitative action research method with a phenomenological/ Disability Critical Race Theory Framework was necessary and essential to capture participants accurately (Creswell et al., 2018). In addition, qualitative studies can be carried out over time (Mertler, 2020). This study period was

conducted over the fall academic semester. Furthermore, quantitative and mixed methods were not used for the study because no quantitative deductive reasoning was used. In addition, the study did not collect numerical data for analysis, which both quantitative and mixed method studies use (Creswell et al., 2018).

Action Research

Action research is a systemic inquiry utilized by teachers, administrators, and others who have a stake in an environment to gather information on how a school or institution of higher learning operates (Mertler, 2020). Action research wants to help resolve or find a solution to the environment where learning happens. As stated, it is an inquiry about an environment where learning takes place (Mertler, 2020).

My desire has always been to help African American males with ADHD succeed within my institutional setting, which is a PWI, and to help PWIs invest time and interest in helping African American males with ADHD achieve academic success. First-year African American male college students with ADHD needed to succeed within my institutional setting. In addition, the research participants needed to be comfortable in their settings. And comfortable attending their PWIs.

Research Context

Research Setting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom and emailed to the participants for health and safety purposes. The only in-person meeting was held at the institution's library in breakout rooms and allowed the researcher to meet with participants individually to discuss the study, answer questions, and collect the participant's informed consent forms. The in-person meeting also allowed me to observe each participant while we met.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Three participants were selected for the study. All three participants were recruited from a midwestern institution of higher learning college or university.

Institution 1

Institution 1 is a private midwestern college located in the central state of Illinois that serves 2500 undergraduate and graduate students. According to the institution's demographic information, 66% of students identified as white. 3.5% identified as African American, 11% identified as Latinx, and less than 2% identified as other.

Institution 2

Institution 2 is a private bi-state institution located between Illinois and the state of Iowa in the central region and serves 3600 undergraduate and graduate students. According to the university's demographical information, 76% of students identified as white, 7.7% as Latinx, 4.4% as African American, and less than 1% as other.

Institution 3

Institution 3 is a public Midwest university, centrally located in Illinois, which serves around 7400 undergraduate and graduate students. According to the university's demographical information, 60% of students identified as white, 16% as African American, 11% as Latinx, and 2% as other.

IRB-approved recruitment flyers were disseminated to all three institutions' deans of Academic and Student Services. In addition, flyers were disseminated in locations where first-year African American male college students with ADHD frequently visited, including libraries, athletic departments, and residential halls. Flyers were also disseminated to disability resource office representatives at the selected institutions. All three college and university deans assisted in the recruitment of participants by emailing the recruitment flyer to different departments, including

student success centers, student inclusion and diversity offices, student life clubs, and other campus organizations.

Participants

The qualitative phenomenological study had a sampling size of three participants. With qualitative methodology, researchers must be careful that saturation does not occur (Creswell, 2016). Saturation is when the same answers appear within the sub-research questions (Creswell, 2016). Too often, saturation results from a sampling size that is too large (Creswell, 2016). A large sampling size can cause a repeat of participants producing the same answer to research questions. Therefore, the sampling size was intentionally small.

Miles and Huberman (1994) state that the participants are essential in providing validity to the study. Participants were selected through a process known as purposeful sampling; purposeful sampling recruits individuals with similar or the same backgrounds (Patton, 1990). Purposeful sampling investigates a similar phenomenon to gain insight into the collective group (Patton, 1990). The criteria for participants purposefully first-year African American male college students with ADHD between 18 to 20 years of age. Excluded from the study were first-year 18–20-year-old African American male college students who did not have a diagnosis of ADHD.

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Research Methods

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Data Collection

Collecting data is crucial because it helps the researcher grasp the research problem and research questions identified (Miles et al., 1994).

Part 1

The data collection process included: conducting two semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with participant YX over Zoom. The first interview with participant YX was conducted on October 3rd, 2021.

Recording allowed me to secure accuracy in Participant YX's shared lived experiences. In addition, using Zoom allowed for the accessibility of having closed captioning so Participant YX could hear and see the research questions. In a qualitative study, the interview process virtually ensures accuracy in transcription (Creswell, 2016).

The only in-person consent form meeting with participant YXZ was conducted on November 9, 2021, which allowed me to discuss my study and the informed consent form in detail and answer Participant YXZ's questions. On November 29, 2021, Participant YZ 's emailed interview, and informed consent meeting were conducted.

Semi-Structured Interviews. Qualitative studies skeptics argue that qualitative research conducted with interviews provides limited indirect information from participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). On the other hand, interviews can provide historical data from participants (Creswell, 2016). If conducted correctly, semi-structured interviews can produce data in large and accurate volumes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Skeptics also argue that a researcher's presence may cause a biased response from participants (Creswell, 2016). However, Marshall and Rossman (2016) share that those participants can become comfortable with a researcher who has built trustworthiness by reflexively sharing past experiences. Another advantage is that the researcher can control if the questions go over the line (Creswell, 2016).

This study allowed participants to be comfortable with my presence in person, virtually, and through emailed interviews. My study was secure for participants, allowing them to reside privately in their dorms or apartments. Each interview was individualized, and interviews were not conducted in a group setting because I wanted to ensure confidentiality.

Semi-structured interview questions were used to guide the data collection process. All participants were asked the same interview questions. I used an interview protocol guide. Figure 4 below is an example of an interview protocol guide. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

The participants were aware of taking their time to answer the questions. Participants were provided with information about the purpose of the study and the interview process.

Figure 4

Example of an Interview Protocol Guide

Basic Information about the interview	Introduction	Opening interview questions	Content questions	Closing instructions/Closing interview questions

Part 2

  The data collection process included asking all three participants for a follow-up interview. The follow-up second interview for participant YX was conducted on November 29, 2021, via Zoom. Participant YXZ and participant YZ did not want a follow-up email interview. They shared that they were satisfied with their first emailed interview responses. The researcher requested a follow-up interview for member checking and validity purposes. *Member checking strategy* allows the researcher to check back with participants to ensure accuracy in their lived experiences (Mertler, 2020). In addition, it enables participants to add to their lived experiences (Mertler, 2020). *Validity* is another strategy that ensures credibility and accuracy in the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

  Timeline 1. Data collection began in the fall 2021 academic semester in October 2021 and concluded with Part 2 of the data collection process, requesting or conducting follow-up interviews in November 2021. As mentioned, the second interview allowed participants to answer further questions, add, change, or question any portion of their recorded and email interviews.

Data Analysis

Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe data analysis as the "intent for qualitative data to make reason out of text and image data which is dividing the data and reconnecting the data" (p. 192). Transcribing and in vivo coding were used to interpret the qualitative data. Transcription is the transformation of recorded audio into written form, and it can be used to analyze a particular phenomenon or event (Durant, 2009). In vivo coding prioritized participants' shared voices and experiences (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Timeline 2. The analysis phase of the study was conducted from December 2021 to March 2022. The researcher relied on a reputable transcription company PSS-Inc recognized by the better business bureau, to transcribe the interviews. Once PSS-Inc returned the transcribed interviews within two weeks. The next step in the analysis process allowed the researcher to code the results meticulously. In vivo coding was used to divide the qualitative data into sentence chunks and color-code by highlighting fragments using blue, orange, yellow, and pink. Sentence chunks divide sentences into groups/parts of words (Albertson, 2021). By dividing the data, emergent themes were captured and organized into categories. This process allowed the researcher to have a clearer view of the research findings and results based on the emergent themes. Emergent themes assist a researcher in "seeing what is trying to be conveyed" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73).

It was imperative that throughout the data collection and analysis process, the organization was maintained. A data accounting log was used to organize and provide descriptive information on each participant. Data accounting logs are used in qualitative research, allowing a researcher to maintain organization with the data collected (Miles et al., 2014). The data accounting log also captured a timeline detailing the interview process, including interview dates, requests, participants' responses for a follow-up interview, and the researcher's observational field notes. As mentioned previously, participants YXZ and YZ declined a follow-up interview. Both participants were satisfied with their first interview.

As mentioned, participant YX and I conducted interviews via recorded sessions through Zoom, and participant YXZ and YZ conducted the first and only interviews through email. In the introduction phase, I met with each participant face to face. To answer and discuss any questions about the informed consent form, allow them to ask questions about the process, get to know me, and sign the informed consent form. During the introductory phase, I captured observation notes on each participant I met face-to-face.

Figure 5

Data Accounting Log

Student YX	Student YXZ	Student YZ
Interview1: Recorded	Interview 1: Emailed	Interview 1: Emailed
Date:10/3/21	Date:11/9/21	Date:11/29/21
Time: 10:30a.m	Time: 10:35a.m	Time: 1:00p.m
Interview2: Recorded	Interview 2: [**no**]	Interview 2:[**no**]
Date:11/29/21	Date:-------------	Date:---------------
Time: 9:15a.m	Time:------------	Time:--------------

Researcher's Positionality

The qualitative method involves a researcher maintaining an up close and personal experience with the participants (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2013). The researcher and participants' interaction introduced ethical and emotional issues into the research process (Locke et al., 2013). The researcher shared that she is an African American woman, a disability service professional working in higher education, working at PWIs of higher learning for over 20-plus years. The researcher's daily work supports students with disabilities, especially African American

males with ADHD attending (PWIs). From experience, the researcher is aware of the struggle African American males with ADHD face at the four-year baccalaureate level.

To ensure there were no personal biases, the participants selected for the study were participants that the researcher did not personally know; only one participant was chosen from the researcher's institution and was not registered with the office of disability services. The other participants were selected from other institutions (mentioned previously).

As Locke (2013) stated, the "researcher, allowing an introduction of self and providing examples of personal experience with participants guide the research process" (p. 183). Identifying biases shapes the interpretations that will develop during the investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Before and during the interview process, participants were comfortable with me. In addition, they appreciated my honesty and transparency throughout the research process. Sharing my researcher role with participants guided my research.

Ethical Considerations

Any researcher planning to conduct a research study must consider ethical issues arising. The integrity, value, confidentiality, and protection of human subjects are most important. Human subjects should be aware of any risk associated with a research study (Connelly, 2014). During the data collection, each participant was made aware of potential risks. In consideration of ethical risks during the research, although they were minimal, the researcher considered risks, such as participants feeling certain emotions and discussing their lived ADHD experiences navigating college. Throughout the interviews and afterward, the researcher reminded participants of institutional resources: counseling services, academic success centers, disability resource centers, offices of student life, and wellness and resiliency.

The study used pseudonyms and de-identifiers to protect participants and to ensure participants' protection, ethics, and confidentiality. In addition to protecting participants, de-identifiers were also created for the three institutions where participants were selected, such as

Midwestern university and Midwest college. Each participant was provided a $20 game stop gift card for their participation in my study.

Developing the informed consent form reiterated that participation in the qualitative action research study was voluntary. Participants were reminded of voluntary status throughout the research process and that participation could have withdrawn from the study without bearing on the student. Each participant received a copy of the recruitment flyer that outlined the study. The researcher was honest and provided transparency and clarity throughout the research process. Through validity, the researcher member-checked and received reassurance from participants on their lived phenomenon experiences. In addition, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, due to COVID-19, recorded interviews through Zoom were conducted, and emailed interviews were conducted to ensure the protection of the research participants and the researcher.

The one in-person meeting was to review, answer, discuss, and collect informed consent forms. Each participant was provided with a copy of the informed consent form. The researcher met individually with each participant, social distance, and wore a face covering. As noted in this chapter, all interviews were conducted separately with participants to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

The researcher's contact information was readily available to participants. Interview recordings were discarded after transcriptions on December 12, 2021. To ensure the security of the research, the researcher was the only one with access to the data and created a password-protected lock. It was stored in a locked cabinet and discarded after three years. Participants were reminded that the researcher would toss the data and its contents.

Chapter Summary

The study aimed to examine the role academic strategies played in the college experience of first-year African American males with ADHD. The chapter described the research.

Methodology, research context, data collection, data analysis, and researcher's positionality.

Chapter 4 will report and discuss the study's findings and results.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussion

This chapter details the study's findings. Each participant's first contribution to success, college experience, academic strategy, accommodations, and student support services is described. The three participants' emergent themes and patterns are identified and discussed. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the research findings. It discusses the study as it relates to the research question of *determining the role academic strategies play in the first-year college experience of African American males with ADHD* and the five additional research questions: 1) How do African American males with ADHD describe the first-year college experience? 2) During the first year of college experience, what factors do African American males with ADHD see as contributing or not contributing to academic success? 3) How often do African American males with ADHD request assistance for academic strategy support such as time management, tutoring support services, and test-taking? 4) For African American males with ADHD, what is the process for registering with a disability resource office to request academic accommodations? 5) How often do African American males with ADHD visit student success centers for support?

Research Findings

As described in chapter three, the scholarly research study had three participants, YX, YXZ, and YZ, all African American male first-year college students with ADHD between the ages of 18 to 20, attending PWI in the midwestern state of Illinois. Each participant was asked the same interview questions. They all shared demographic background information on their majors, living on campus or off campus if they had roommates or did not have roommates, where they were from, and their college experience (see Table 2).

Table 2

Participants' Demographic Background

	Participant YX	Participant YXZ	Participant YZ

Age	19	20	18
Race/ethnicity	African American	African American	African American
Diagnosis	ADHD	ADHD	ADHD
Major	Philosophy	Law Enforcement	Business
Location	Chicago	Louisville	Trenton
Institution type	Private Midwest college	Public Midwest University	Private Midwest University
Housing type	On campus (single dorm room)	Off campus (apartment)	On campus (roommate)

Participant YX

Contribution to Academic Success

The first interview with participant YX was conducted through Zoom on October 3rd, 2021. Initially, in the first interview, he was nervous, but he opened up and relaxed as the interviews and discussion progressed. By the second interview conducted through Zoom on November 29, 2021, he was very relaxed. When asked, as a first-year African American male with ADHD, what assists him in succeeding academically in college, he shared what does not contribute to his academic success, "I feel that my professors and classmates think I am lazy and like prejudging me because I will stare off into space many times in class." He further shared, "little do they know I am not lazy and do not want to do the work. I try to stay focused but having ADHD makes it tough."

College Experience

Participant YX hailed from the Chicagoland area and had always attended schools with other African American students from elementary, middle, and all four high school years. When asked to describe his first-year college experience, he responded, "My first-year college experience differs from high school; not many students on campus like me or that look like me. I went from a coddled, comfortable home and high school environment with my family to a mostly white

environment with a different experience. Sometimes I am nervous about being away from them and not seeing many people who look like me. But then I like that I will learn in this new space." The new college experience took him from what was comfortable and familiar to an unfamiliar space.

Academic Strategy

When asked how he balances time for academic strategy preparation, such as tutoring and exam preparedness, he responded, "I am too unorganized, and I know that sounds crazy because I could seek help with my time management. I would describe how I balance my time to deal with it. I have never requested any academic help with tutoring or test-taking. It would be nice, considering I am disorganized and have difficulty paying attention. I take one subject at a time. I may reach out to my girlfriend because I have done all right doing what I do, balancing my time and academics. My grades are B average, so I am doing ok." He maintains a 3.0-grade point average or above. However, he does not seek academic strategy support for his academics. He feels he is "too unorganized" for help with his time and academic strategizing. So, he "deals with it" his way.

Accommodations

When asked about his process to receive classroom accommodations, he shared, "I am not sure of the process to receive classroom accommodations. I know I should because, with my condition, I know some accommodation would help, but I believe it is registering with the disability office. I am not registered." He is "not registered" with his college disability resource office and had no plans to register. However, he knows "some accommodations would help." He lacks understanding of the process of registering with a DRS office.

Student Support Services

When asked, as an African American male with ADHD, how often he used student support resources, his response "I rarely visit the student success center for resource support because, to be honest with you, I do not see staff or students who look like me. I am unsure how I would be welcomed; do you know what I mean? My friends whom I would go to if I needed an answer to something. Or, as I said before, I figure it out." He was aware of the student resource center and the type of support services there but did not feel "welcomed" in the center. So, if he needed support, he relied on his "friends whom he would go to."

Participant YXZ

Contribution to Academic Success

An emailed interview was conducted with participant YXZ on November 9, 2021, a follow-up interview was requested, but he was "satisfied" with the first emailed interview and his responses. When asked, as a first-year African American male with ADHD, what assists him in succeeding academically in college, his response, "I do not want anyone to think I am slow because of my condition. I find that people not knowing me or understanding why I fidget in class does not help me. They wonder why I sometimes feel uncomfortable in class, not because I am stupid. I try hard; I do. People understanding me and not judging me would help me succeed." He further shared, "in the meantime trying is what I'll continue to do and work on getting my grades up to par." He struggles with his academics and maintains a grade point average a little below a 2.0. In addition, he took a few years before attending college to "work" and get himself "ready" for college. It is especially "important" for him to get his grades up because his major is "law enforcement" and he wants the best grades possible.

College Experience

Participant YXZ is originally from Louisville, but the family resides in Atlanta. When asked to describe the first-year college experience, he shared, "coming to a pretty much all-white college environment was different and new and made me nervous." In addition, he shared his "misses' family" and "coming to ZZ university was a big change from high school. I had more black students that looked like me and got me in class when I talked. Now, I am the only one who looks like me in class. Yes, it is a big change. I take this experience one day at a time." With his grades "not being the best in high school," having a few years off to "work" and "figure out life" helped him "somewhat mature and prepare" him for the college experience.

Academic Strategy

When asked how he balances time for academic strategy preparation, such as tutoring and exam preparedness, he shared, "I really should request some help in the areas of time management for me because I struggle, and my ADHD does not help, and probably tutoring support too because I know they can help, and I need to raise my GPA, but I have always struggled. I will ask one of the few friends I have here on campus who looks like me before I go to a tutor. That probably sounds bad, but it is what it is." With the "few friends" he developed relationships with on-campus, he was more comfortable connecting with them instead of "requesting" help with academic strategies that could assist him academically.

Accommodations

When asked about his process to receive classroom accommodations, he shared, "I cannot describe the process for academic accommodations because I have never received accommodations, and I could not tell you where the disability resource office is. Plus, I do not want to be stigmatized for having ADHD and asking for help." Although classroom

accommodations could provide him with classroom support and access, "asking for help" means it is a bad thing and would further cause others to "stigmatize" him.

Student Support Services

When asked, as an African American male with ADHD, how often he used student support resources, he shared, "Student support resources I use are my own, like my friends for study groups. There is a student success center with many support resources, but I do not go to the center. I get together with my frat brothers, and we have small study groups when I need them." He said, "I do not go because I am uncomfortable in that setting. There are no black staff or peers I see whenever I walk by. Considering my ADHD and being a black male, I already deal with that daily. I do not need to feel even more uncomfortable seeking support from staff that does not look like me. I know I need it, especially this semester. I am trying to get my grades up. But I do what I can, and if needed, I can go to my frat brothers who look like me." He, too, like participant YX, was aware of a student success center for support on his campus but does not go because he feels "uncomfortable in that setting." Hence, he relies on his fraternity for support.

Participant YZ

Contribution to Academic Success

The emailed interview was conducted with participant YZ on November 29, 2021, a follow-up interview was requested, but he was "satisfied" with the first emailed interview and his responses. When asked, as a first-year African American male with ADHD, what assists him in succeeding academically in college, his reply was, "Because of my condition, ADHD, I feel that my professors do not take me seriously when I tell them I am struggling to stay focused," what would help him succeed would be that his professors " take him seriously" when he communicates, he is "struggling" to understand the work. He also shared, "here I am, a black man in class with all white students, and it is problematic that they do not get me." He wants his peers and professors to

"get" him. He maintains a 3.0 GPA or better and "works hard" to maintain it, despite the lack of understanding from his environment.

College Experience

When asked to describe his first-year college experience, his response "I was not sure about attending flintstone university because of not having family around and my friends. It made me nervous that here I was at this white school, a very different place than I am used to. So far, I am trying to make the best of the experience, and I try to be me and connect with the students who look like me." Participant YZ is from the east coast of Trenton. His environment has always included a melting pot of people of color, primarily African Americans, from elementary to high school. Being in an all-white environment where there were fewer students of color was "different" than what "he was used to. He is "making the best" of his experience.

Academic Strategy

When asked how he balances time for academic strategy preparation, such as tutoring and exam preparedness, he shared, "I have never requested assistance for academic help, not from tutors or professors, and I know I should, but I do not. I try to do what I can, which has worked for me. I keep over a 3.0; it is hard because I lose focus a lot, and it takes me a lot longer to finish stuff, but I do it. So, I do not prepare for tutoring services nor reach out to them. As I said, I do what I can by reading and rereading or asking a friend for help. I know I should do better but hey." He has "never requested" help to learn academic strategy preparedness. Although he struggles with the symptoms of his ADHD, he "tries and does what he can." In addition, even though symptoms cause him to "lose focus a lot" and "takes him longer finish" his schoolwork he sticks to it and "does it."

Accommodations

When asked about his process to receive classroom accommodations, he shared, "I did not know I could get classroom accommodations, and I think that requires disability services, and I am not registered with that office." He was unaware that "classroom accommodations" was a support that he could have. In addition, he is "not registered" with a DRS office and did not understand how to obtain classroom accommodations.

Student Support Services

When asked, as an African American male with ADHD, how often he used student support resources, he shared, "My answer is that I have never used the campus student support resources at the center. Nobody in the center looks like me and probably would not understand what I need. Nobody has ever acknowledged me to some of the student peer leaders who work there I also have in class. My mama taught me not to go where I am not welcome. If I need something, I have a few friends on campus. Or, honestly, I would call a friend back home." He would instead "call a friend back home" instead of using the student support center. My classmates work in the center. Due to their lack of "acknowledging" him, he has "never used the center." He would instead go to his "few friends" on campus for support.

Discussion

The development of word clouds was used to examine the results of the study and to reveal emergent themes. Figures 6 to 8 below were used to identify the four emergent themes of African American male misconception, environmental transition, reluctance resulting in passivity, and a sense of belonging. Words clouds are a "visual depiction of the frequency tabulation of words in any selected written materials" (Miley & Read, 2011, p. 92). In addition are often used to "summarize research interviews" (McNaught et al., 2010).

Figure 6

Participant YX

Figure 7

Participant YXZ

Figure 8

Participant YZ

Emergent Themes

African American Male misconception

A misconception can influence a person's attitude and actions toward a particular person or group (Udonsi, 2022). Misconceptions are often unfortunate realities for African American males navigating society's silos, such as silos in healthcare, business, and education (Snyder & Wormington, 2020). In addition, an African American male with ADHD battles society daily while being misunderstood and navigating the realm of higher education (Mendoza et al., 2020). For African American males with ADHD, the intersectional pain of being an African American male with ADHD, occupying an environment that often does not see nor value them, can be exhausting (Mendoza et al., 2020). Commonly shared statements were "Not wanting to be judged for having ADHD," "Not being understood," and "How hard I have to work."

All three of the study's participants feel the burden of misconception, and I can imagine the exhaustion they feel. As African American male misconception was the first dominant theme for the qualitative data, another theme that emerged was environmental transition.

Environmental Transition

All three participants were asked what has their first-year college experience been like. All participants shared commonalities in that they, in one way or another, were "nervous about attending a college away from home" and "unsure about going to school on a white campus."

An environmental transition is leaving one familiar environment for another unfamiliar environment (Pavlinek, 2020). The participants left what was comfortable and familiar to a different, unsure, and unknown environment that heavily impacted their first-year college experience and decisions. However, the first-year college experience for the study's participants was still in progress. Based on participants' responses, it was understood that environments that provide a culturally responsive climate could shape a student's college, academic, career pathway, and experience (Pearsall, 2018). Students of color who experience culturally responsive environments are more likely to succeed academically (Robinson, 2020).

 In addition, culturally responsive environments matter to African American males with varying disabilities, such as learning and ADHD (Robinson, 2020). Students such as YX, YXZ, and YZ, would benefit from PWIs working to integrate them into cultural environments that are responsive to students whose needs are different (Adams & McBrayer, 2020).

Reluctance Results in Passivity

The third dominant theme from the study's findings was reluctance resulting in passivity. Reluctance is hesitation to act (Green et al., 2021). When participants were asked to describe how they balance time for academic strategy preparation, such as tutoring and exam preparedness, they shared, "I do the best I can," "I know I should seek academic strategy, but I don't," and "I do what I can." Based on the shared phrases, all three participants know that academic strategies a) exist and b) could assist them further with their academic success. However, they are reluctant to seek out or request assistance with educational strategies such as time management, tutoring support services, or test-taking preparedness.

Passivity is the willful acceptance of surrounding circumstances without resistance (Brüggemann et al., 2019). In addition, passivity within the higher education setting leads to academic and social disengagement (Brüggemann et al., 2019). As African American males with ADHD navigating the first-year college experience at predominately white institutions, I found that all three normalized reluctancy resulting in passivity without an internal desire to want change.

Moreover, when asked the interview question, what is the process to receive classroom accommodations? Further reluctance to act on their passivity was evident. They were a) not registered with a disability resource office, b) they were unaware of the support a DRS office could provide them and, c) they were unsure of the registration process or where a disability resource office was located on their college campuses.

Shared common phrases were "I'm not registered" and "I have not gone." Disability resources offices (DRS) provide academic accommodations to students with a diagnosed disability or disorder, such as ADHD, through reasonable access to a classroom environment (Newman et al., 2021). Accommodations can include extended time to complete an exam or quizzes and mandatory one-on-one academic check-ins with professors or tutors (Newman et al., 2021).

Sense of Belonging

The fourth dominant theme that emerged was a *sense of belonging*. According to Strayhorn (2012), "Sense of belonging includes a student's perception of academic, social, and cultural support on a college campus feeling a sensation of connectedness, experiencing the act of being cared for or that the student matters within the campus cultural climate. And a sensational feeling of being valued by peers, faculty, and staff" (p. 3). A sense of belonging is contributed to academic achievement and success at the collegiate level (Ahn & Davis, 2020). A sense of belonging is often not felt among students of color attending PWIs (Adams & McBrayer, 2020). It is not felt among students from marginalized communities because of differences in intersectional identities; students

from marginalized communities, such as students of color with disabilities, sense such as preconceived judgments based on their race or disability (Crenshaw, 2017).

All three participants expressed a desire to "belong" and wanting "a sense of value" within PWI environments. Common phrases shared were "I have never been to the success center," "I do not see staff like me," and "I have not visited the success center." These themes revealed that African American males with ADHD in their first-year college experience do their best to navigate a campus cultural climate that can negatively impact academic strategies' role in their college success.

Research Questions

The study's research question determined the role academic strategies play in the first-year college experience of African American males with ADHD and found the role educational strategies play can negatively impact African American male college students with ADHD in the first year if not provided college campus support services in PWI environments that aide in their success. The study's additional five sub-research questions will be discussed in this section. The questions were: 1) How do African American males with ADHD describe the first-year college experience, 2) During the first year of the college experience, what factors do African American males with ADHD see as contributing or not contributing to academic success, 3) How often do African American males with ADHD request assistance for academic strategy support such as time management, tutoring support services, and test-taking strategy, 4) For African American males with ADHD, what is the process for registering with a disability resource office to request academic accommodations? 5) How often do African American males with ADHD visit student success centers for support?

Description of the First-Year College Experience

When asked to describe the first-year college experience. It was established that a new, uncertain PWI environment could negatively influence first-year African American males with ADHD. From what is familiar to what is "different," uncertainty can take first-year African American males with ADHD out of their comfort zones. PWI environments where engaged learning, cultural responsiveness, and acceptance are geared toward men of color contribute to their academic success (Welbeck et al., 2019). African American males with ADHD navigating the first-year college experience deserve an environmental benefit for their academic success (Lalor & Williams, 2021).

Description of Academic Success Contribution

The study's first research question asked, during the first-year college experience, what factors contribute or do not contribute to academic success. Based on the study's results, African American males with ADHD experience misconceptions about who they are, which does not contribute to their academic success or well-being. African Americans experience a higher level of passed pre-judgment when it comes to disability (Lee et al., 2019). Negatively sharing misconceptions about being African American males with ADHD creates exhaustion in predominately white institutional spaces (Tucker et al., 2009).

Description of Academic Strategy

The study's third research question asked how often first-year African American males with ADHD request assistance for educational strategies support for time management, tutoring support services, and test-taking strategies. The study revealed that although two participants maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or better, one had a grade point average below 2.0. None of the participants had requested academic assistance with time management, tutoring support

services, or test-taking strategies. Instead "did the best" they could on their own or by "asking friends."

Description of Accommodations Support

Research question four of the study asked what the process was for registering with a disability resources office to request academic accommodations. The findings revealed that no participants were registered with a disability resource office (DRS). The offices can provide students with reasonable academic classroom accommodations (Newman et al., 2021). In addition, the study's results reveal that passivity in education can lead to academic and social disengagement (Lemus et al., 2022). Furthermore, the findings showed that the participants normalized reluctance leading to passivity without an internal desire to want change.

Description of Student Success Support

Research question five of the study asked how often a visit to the student success center for support occurred. Results of the study revealed that participants had never visited a student success center on their college campuses, in part to not "feeling a sense of belonging" in PWI environments. They are left trying to figure out their academic success independently.

<div align="center">

Chapter Summary

</div>

This chapter detailed the study's findings. Contribution to success, college experience, academic strategy, accommodations, and student support services of each participant was described. Emergent themes and patterns between the three participants were identified and discussed. The research findings and a discussion of the study's research questions were also provided. Chapter 5 will address implications for practice, suggestions for future research, and the study's limitations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

"U Will Know"

"Your dreams ain't easy; you just stick by your plan. Go from boys to men. You must act like a

man. When it gets hard, Y'all, you just grab what you know. Stand up tall, and don't you fall.

'U will know"

-Lyrics by Black Men United

Introduction

The above lyrics from the song, 'U will know' by Black Men United, sum up the journey

that many African American males' with ADHD experience. African American male college

students with ADHD have dreams and goals like everyone, yet attaining these goals can sometimes

be challenging. Nonetheless, this population has shown resilience, recognizing that they must stay

the course as they climb the ladder for collegiate academic success.

This chapter will summarize the study's research findings, address implications for

practice, make recommendations for future research, and provide limitations and a conclusion.

Findings Summary

This qualitative, phenomenological action research study with a disability-critical race

theory framework examined the role academic strategies play in the first-year college experience

of African American males with ADHD. The study answered five questions: 1) How do African

American males with ADHD describe the first-year college experience? 2) During the first year of

college experience, what factors do African American males with ADHD see as contributing or not

contributing to academic success? 3) How often do first-year African American males with ADHD

request assistance for academic strategy support such as time management, tutoring support

services, and test-taking? 4) For African American males with ADHD, what is the process for

registering with a disability resource office to request academic accommodations? and 5) How often do African American males with ADHD visit student success centers for support?

Description of the First-Year College Experience

Predominately white institutional (PWI) environments can negatively impact first-year African American male college students with ADHD. This population of students can benefit from PWI environments where engaged learning, cultural responsiveness, and acceptance are geared toward men of color (Welbeck et al., 2019). PWI environments can accept men of color, contributing to their cultural identity (Welbeck & Torres, 2019). First-year African American male college students with ADHD want acceptance for who they are while they strive for academic success at PWIs.

Description of Academic Success Contribution

Regarding disability, African Americans experience a higher level of pre-judgment than non-persons of color with disabilities (Lee et al., 2019). First-year African American male college students with ADHD experience misconceptions about who they are (Banks & Gibson, 2016). In addition, negative misconceptions about being African American males with ADHD create exhaustion in predominately white institutional spaces, which does not contribute to their academic success or well-being (Tucker & Dixon, 2009).

Description of Academic Strategy

The study revealed that the participants were uncomfortable in their PWI settings requesting academic strategy assistance for time management, tutoring support services, or assistance for test-taking strategy support. Instead, they tried on their own or asked friends with the same cultural background for help.

Description of Accommodations Support

Findings revealed that no participants registered with a disability resource office (DRS). These offices can provide students with reasonable academic classroom accommodations (Newman et al., 2021). It was also revealed that the participants were not using accommodations and were reluctant to visit a DRS office. In education, reluctance resulting in passivity can lead to academic and social disengagement (Lemus et al., 2022).

Description of Student Success Support

Results of the study revealed that participants had never visited a student success center on their college campuses, in part to not "feeling a sense of belonging" in PWI environments. Without feeling a sense of belonging on their college campuses, they are left to figure out their academic success independently.

Implications for Practice

As a result of the study's findings, this researcher provides three recommendations, early intervention outreach, disability resource awareness, and culturally-responsive practices. The recommendations can benefit institutions of higher learning, especially PWIs that serve first-year African American male college students with ADHD.

Early Intervention Outreach

Early intervention must ensure academic success for first-year African American males with ADHD on college and university campuses. Universities should consider the implementation of various program interventions (Sneyers & De Witte, 2018), including early intervention, such as required academic advising check-ins (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012). Required academic advising check-ins would provide the first-year African American male college students with ADHD the opportunity to "receive student-faculty mentoring from a faculty advisor, while also building a student-faculty mentor relationship" (Santos et al., 2004, p. 337).

In addition, required academic advising check-ins would provide first-year African American male college students with ADHD the benefit of "goal setting and learning about various other beneficial academic campus resources from their faculty advisors" (Santos & Reigadas, 2004, p. 338). Miyatsu and McDaniel (2018) share that "certain academic resources can assist with academic success such as a) studying as a priority-how often and long do students study, b) utilizing tutoring services, c) organization of homework, projects, and in-class assignments, d) time management-balancing class, college life, and extracurricular activities" (p. 390).

Disability and Academic Resource Awareness

Disability resource centers are also vital to early intervention success for students of color with disabilities (Banks & Gibson, 2016). According to Green (2005), disability resource offices must be willing to make students aware of the benefits of receiving accommodations and the registration process for registering with a DRS office. Through awareness, first-year African American male college students with ADHD understand that academic resources exist to help them achieve (Williams, 2021). Confidentiality can be done by visiting first-year orientation classes to discuss DRS services (Lalor et al., 2021). African American males with disabilities need training on how self-advocacy can assist them in appropriately requesting classroom accommodations (Walker & Test, 2011).

Culturally-Responsive Practices

Institutions of higher learning, such as PWIs that serve students of color, must be willing to create practices that consider the cultural sensitivity of the students of color they serve (Sue et al., 2003). In addition, culturally responsive practices seek "individuals who are becoming aware of their assumptions on race, class, disability, and gender and seek to understand the different cultural identities found in different people and places. In addition, through cultural practices, individuals such as school administrators seek to develop and practice relevant and sensitive intervention

strategies and skills for children and students from culturally different backgrounds" (Sue et al., 2003, p. 31).

Examples of culturally responsive practices that PWIs can utilize include forming relationships with diverse populations, discussing social justice and political issues with students, and incorporating current cultural events that have conversations about people of color with disabilities (Larson et al., 2018).

Suggestions for Future Research

This study examined the role academic strategies play in the first-year college experience of African American males with ADHD. Future research may include studies that investigate the experience of African American males with ADHD and the role academic strategies play in their college experience during their sophomore, junior, and senior years. Future research should also examine first-year African American males with ADHD attending Predominately Black Institutions (PBI), also known as HBCUs (Jones, 2021).

Furthermore, future research should also examine the role academic strategies play in the college experience of African American males with ADHD at the community college level. There is a dilemma in retaining African American males with disabilities at two-year and community colleges. Research has shown that this same population of first-year African American male students with ADHD and the barriers they face also exists at the community college level (Keflezighi et al., 2016).

Limitations

When describing the limitations of this study, the Covid-19 pandemic must first be noted. The Covid-19 pandemic prevented the researcher and participants from conducting interviews in person. As mentioned previously in this study, the only in-person meeting was to collect informed consent forms. Interviews were conducted virtually and via email. Therefore, the researcher was

limited in observing participants. Secondly, although the researcher achieved the goal of having three participants for the study, the participant sampling size could be increased to provide even richer findings.

Lastly, the study utilized qualitative action research data collection using semi-structured interviews. A mixed method approach could produce strengths from qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell et al., 2017). The benefit of using the quantitative method in research is that it provides a study with deductive reasoning (Creswell et al., 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter concluded that the role academic strategies can play in the first-year college experience of African American males with ADHD could harm their academic success in that first-year African American male college students with ADHD who navigate predominately white institutional environments experience African American male misconception, environmental transition, reluctance resulting in passivity, and desire for a sense of belonging. However, when equipped with the right tools, such as early intervention outreach, disability resource knowledge, and a culturally responsive campus environment within the classroom (Sneyers et al., 2018, Santos et al., 2004, Banks & Gibson, 2016), a positive experience could result in a successful first- year academic experience. Furthermore, an inclusive campus environment for first-year African American male college students with ADHD could result in persistence beyond the first year (Banks et al., 2016).

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APPENDIX A

FIRST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1.) As an African American male with ADHD, what assists you in succeeding or not succeeding?

2.) Can you describe what the first-year college experience is like?

3.). Can you describe how you balance time for academic strategy preparation, such as tutoring and exam preparedness?

4.) What is the process to receive classroom accommodations?

5.) As an African American male with ADHD, how often do you use student support resources?

6.) Is there a question you do not understand?

7.) Is there any question you would like me to repeat?

8.) Are there any questions you have for me?

APPENDIX B

SECOND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1.) What is the process to receive classroom accommodations?

2.) As an African American male with ADHD, how often do you use student support resources?

3.). As an African American male with ADHD, what assists you in succeeding or not succeeding?

4.) Can you describe how you balance time for academic strategy preparation, such as tutoring and exam preparedness?

5.) What has the first-year college experience been like?

6.) Please let me know if there is a question you do not understand?

7.).) Is there any question you would like me to repeat?

8.) Are there any questions you have for me?

Recruitment Flyer
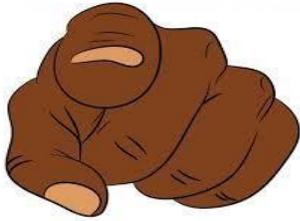
We Want You!

A research study seeks **First-year college students who are African American males with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder** (ADHD). We want to hear about your lived experiences navigating the college experience and share with us what role academic strategies play in your academics. If you are interested in sharing your experience to assist current and future African American males with ADHD in the first year of college succeed academically, please read the following information:

Interested participants' criteria for the study are a **first-year college student, an African American male between the ages of 18 and 20 years of age with a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**. Participants should be willing to **meet virtually.**

As stated, participants will be recruited to participate in a research study about the experiences of first-year African American males with ADHD and the role academic strategies play in their academics.

Participants will partake in two confidential audio-recorded interviews over a three-to-four-week period to ensure all participants provide their experiences. Interviews will last between 30 minutes to 60 minutes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic as an unanticipated condition, the interviews will be conducted virtually over Zoom or what media-based service is comfortable for participants. A **$20 game-stop gift card** is provided as compensation. **<u>Participation is voluntary in the research study and can be withdrawn at any time.</u>**

 Kamilah Williams is currently a doctoral student at Bradley University and leads this IRB-approved study. If you are interested, please contact Kamilah Williams at (xxx)xxx-xxx or via email at <u>kamwilliamss@yahoo.com</u>. **All information will be kept confidential.**

Information and Consent Form

Study Title: Determining Role, Academic Strategies Play on First-Year College Experience of African American Males with ADHD

Invitation to be part of a research study:
You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate you must be a first-year college student, African American male diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Between the ages of 18 to 20 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

The purpose of this study is to hear about the lived experiences of African American males with ADHD navigating the first-year college experience and sharing what role academic strategies play in your academics.

What will take place?
If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in two face-to-face interviews virtually. 3 to 5 participants will conduct interviews over Zoom, Google Meet Hangout, or a web-based media service that participants are comfortable with. This will take approximately three to four weeks, from 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to participate and can stop at any time.

Please take the time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to participate in this research project.

What are the risks of participating in the study?
In all research, there is a slight risk of a breach of confidentiality. However, measures are being taken to minimize these risks (see "how your information will be protected" below.

What are the benefits of participating in the study?
There is no direct benefit to participating. However, participation will contribute to understanding the lived experiences of African American males with ADHD during the first-year college experience. It is crucial to add this population of students' voices to the body of research that is primarily missing. What is learned can be applied at higher learning institutions to better serve this population of students, hoping to retain more black males.

What happens if I do not participate?
There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled if a participant chooses not to participate in the study. Participants may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant otherwise is entitled. Participation or no participation will not affect your student status at your institution.

Are there any incentives for participating in the study?
After the study, you will receive a $20 gift card to game stop.

How will your information be protected?
We plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your privacy, we will not use your name or any other information that can be used to identify you. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your

name. Your information will be stored in a locked office, and the computer used will be password protected. Only the researcher will have access. There is a risk that participants may feel uncomfortable talking about ADHD and their academic experience. I will remind participants of the resources available: counseling services, and student success. Participants are allowed to fidget or stand during the interview process.

We will protect the confidentiality of your research record by keeping it secured in a locked office that only the researcher can access.

After the study, what will happen to the data collected?
Upon completion of the study, the data collected and after it is transcribed will be destroyed after three years.

What are the costs?
There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Your participation in the study is voluntary.
Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or leave the study at any time. You do not need to answer any question you do not want to answer. If you withdraw before the study is completed, your information will be destroyed. If you withdraw from the study before the end. The $20 game-stop gift card will be prorated to $10.00.

Who should I call with questions or problems about this study?
If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher in charge of this study: Kamilah Williams, xxx-xxx-xxxx, email: kamwilliamss@yahoo.com.

Who should I contact with questions about my rights as a research participant?
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research (CUHSR)
Bradley University
1501 W Bradley Avenue
Peoria, IL 61625
(309) 677-3877

<div align="center">Your informed consent</div>

You are voluntarily deciding to participate in this study. By signing the consent, you consent to the interview being recorded and transcribed. Furthermore, your signature means that you have read and understood the information and have decided to participate. Your signature also means that the information on this consent form has been fully explained to you, and all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. If you have any additional questions during the study, you should contact the researcher(s).

I agree to participate in this study   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Participant **[if appropriate, or legally authorized representative]**

_____
Printed Name

BRADLEY University

DATE: 29 JUN 2021

TO: Kamilah Williams, Daniel McCloud
FROM: Bradley University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research

 STUDY TITLE: Determining role academic strategies play in the first year
                    college experience for AA males with ADHD
CUHSR #:   21-074-P
SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Review

ACTION: Approved
APPROVAL DATE: 29 JUN 2021
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above referenced proposal. The Bradley University Committee on the Use of Human Subject in Research has reviewed your study and approval has been granted pursuant to 45 CFR 46.110(a) expeditable under Category 7 [Research on group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs, or practices, and social behavior or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies].

This research meets the regulatory requirements for approval as specified in 45 CFR 45. 111. Specifically, the risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits to subjects and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonable be expected to result, and that written informed consent will be sought from each prospective subject or the subjects legally authorized representative. The informed consent document meets the regulatory requirements as outlined in 45 CFR 46.116. Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant to receive a copy of the consent document.

All vita and ethics certificates are on file.

Please Note: Research must be conducted according to the proposal that was approved. Any revisions to the protocol must first be approved by the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research (CUHSR) prior to implementation and substantial changes may result in the need for further review. Please submit a Request for Minor Modification of a Current Protocol found on our website at https://www.bradley.edu/academic/cio/osp/studies/cuhsr/forms/ should a need for a change arise.

While no untoward effects are anticipated, should they arise, please report any untoward effects to CUHSR immediately.

Please retain copies of all records pertaining to this study for a minimum of three (3) years from the study's closure. Be aware that some professional standards may require researchers to retain records for a longer period of time.

<div align="center">

Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in
Research – 100 Kauffman 1501 W Bradley
Ave.
Peoria, IL 61625

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This letter will serve as your written notice that the study is approved unless a more formal letter is needed. You can request a formal letter from the CUHSR secretary in the Office of Sponsored Programs

Andrew J Strubhar, PT, PhD
CUHSR Chair