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Advising Black Students and Anti-Oppressive Frameworks: A Systematic Review of College Access and College Counseling Literature



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ABSTRACT

It is well known that Black students have higher expectations for attending college than their White and non-White peers, yet consistently lag behind in degree attainment. It is important then that practitioners use differentiated approaches with and researchers offer disaggregated analyses of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic minoritized populations in the college advising process. Doing so could reveal systemic barriers to achievement and advancement that are specific, in this instance, to Black students. Since the role and practice of college advising is (or at least should be) informed by the extant literature, then a systematic review is an ideal avenue for scholarly inquiry, paying particular attention to how prior literature utilized anti-oppressive frameworks. This method allowed us to map current knowledge and strategies, as well as identify conceptual, methodological, and interpretive gaps in the current literature. Across our analysis, our findings reveal there is more work to be done, particularly focusing on representation, disaggregation, and application.

Keywords: Black students, anti-racism, anti-deficit, college advising, high school counselors

Introduction

There is widespread belief in a college education to, on an individual level, reduce economic inequality and increase opportunity and social mobility in America. On a societal level, it is believed that a diverse and better educated citizenry is necessary to

meet workforce needs, ensure national and global competitiveness (Ma et al., 2016), and contributes to “reduced dependence on public assistance programs, and greater tax revenue” (Mitra, 2011, p. 7), among other public, social and economic benefits. Hence, making college accessible to everyone is one of the most pressing concerns facing U.S. higher education (Eckel & King, 2004; Mitra, 2011). Accordingly, college access and the college-going journey is one of the most extensively explored topics in higher education and is often studied in the context of understanding disenfranchised students and their families. Interrogating systemic barriers to college access, such as prohibitive policies, programming, and institutional type (Deil-Amen & Turley, 2007), are a matter of national importance. Scholars have explored not only the benefits to having a degree, but also the impediments to degree attainment across student characteristics, both within and beyond the control of students and the educational systems they navigate. Disparate educational outcomes remain for racially and ethnically minoritized populations, illustrating that the benefits of college are not fully realized and can be

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attributed to the racist legacy that has marred America's educational system (See Anderson, 2016; Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Westminster School Dist. of Orange County v. Mendez, 1947; Wilder, 2013; Wong Him v. Callahan, 1902). Higher education participation varies among racial/ethnic groups, with Black and Hispanic students of traditional college age, being less likely to enroll in postsecondary institutions compared to their White and Asian peers (Ma et al., 2016). In a recent report titled Degree Attainment for Black Adults: National and State Trends, Nichols and Schak (2018) expressed:

achieving these "degree attainment" goals will be directly related to [a state's] ability to increase the shares of Black and Latino adults in those states that have college credentials and degrees, particularly as population growth among communities of color continues to outpace the White population and older White workers retire and leave the workforce.

This further reiterates the need for a diverse educated populace. And while it has proven fruitful to make comparisons between Black and Hispanic/Latin* students and White and Asian students, there are discernable differences because of the various ways racism has manifested differently across groups. Thus, it is important that practitioners be mindful of differentiated approaches with and researchers offer disaggregated analyses of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic minoritized populations, particularly, in the college

advising process. Doing so would reveal the myriad barriers to achievement and advancement that are, for example, specific to Black students. Guiffrida (2005) explained "despite the fact that African Americans are more likely than ever to earn high school degrees and attend college, they continue to be far less likely than White Americans to attain college degrees" (p. 99). Further, Black students tend to have higher expectations for attending college, higher than their White and non-White peers, and yet the trend persists, they continue to lag behind in degree attainment (NCES, 2018). And in an interview, Nichols concluded that "When you look at access for Black students, by and large, the data are awful," (St. Amour, 2020, para. 5). As such, college counselors¹ should adopt anti-oppressive - specifically anti-deficit and anti-racist approaches when advising Black students of their college choices.

College Advising

College counselors are defined professionally as gatekeepers who can either provide access or limit access to postsecondary options for their students (Ortiz & Gonzales, 2000; Martinez & Deil-Amen, 2015). Hence, they are what Stanton-Salazar (1997; 2011) referred to as institutional agents; those "non-kin agents who occupy relatively high positions in the multiple dimensional stratification system,

¹ College counselors are those individuals who do the work of college advising, both at the high school and college level. This term college counselor, is often interchanged with college advisor and academic advisor. In this paper we will primarily use the terms presented in the extant literature.

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and who are well positioned to provide key forms of social and institutional support” (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1074). However, in most public high schools, it is difficult for counselors to actively support students through the college application process, as they are often overburdened by responsibility and high caseloads, with an average student-to-counselor ratio of 471:1 nationally, which is beyond the 250:1 ratio recommended by National Association for College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), and American School Counselor Association (ASCA). College counselors are often only able to dedicate about a third of their time to college counseling, as they are often pulled by administrative responsibilities, such as scheduling and test coordinating (Hurley & Coles, 2015). Additionally, high school counselors often lack training for college advising, as it is typically not a requirement of school counseling education (Clayton, 2019). While Guiffrida (2005) explained these professionals are in a unique position, in this instance, “to support Black students and their families for the challenges they face when transitioning to college” (p. 99), time constraints, an overburdened workload, and systemic racism, which we will define in the next section, are conceivably roadblocks to Black students’ academic advancement. For sure, the role and practice of college advising represent an ideal avenue for scholarly inquiry. So, we turn to the literature on college access and advising to discern how college counselors and advisors are informed to better support, particularly, Black students’

transition to college. Since their understanding is often informed by the extant literature available to them as both graduate students and professionals, scholars should approach this line of inquiry ethically, employing anti-oppressive theoretical and analytic frameworks to provide a nuanced and culturally responsive approach to studying college advising, with Black students in mind. The resultant research could inform and improve the practices and approaches of college advisors as the holders of college knowledge, as well as policy makers and decision makers/implementers. Therefore, the purpose of this systematic review is to make sense of and critically analyze college access and college counseling and advising research, reported in scholarly academic journals related to advising Black students in the college-going process. We will pay particular attention to how the extant literature is informed by anti-oppressive frameworks. This method allows us to not only map current knowledge and strategies, but also identify conceptual, methodological, and interpretive gaps in the current literature (Bearman et al., 2012). The following research questions guide our study:

1. What is the nature of representation for Black students in the college access and college counseling and advising literature?
2. What are the themes found in research results related to advising Black students in the college-going process?

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3. How are anti-oppressive frameworks, specifically anti-racism and anti-deficit, surfaced in the college access and college counseling and advising literature related to advising Black students?
4. What is missing from the college access and college counseling literature related to advising Black students?

Theoretical Grounding: Applying Anti-Oppressive Frameworks

Anti-oppressive frameworks are a collection of theories that encapsulate and seek to critically address the -isms that have come to plague society, including educational spaces as microcosms. It is beyond the scope of the current study to review the myriad anti-oppressive frameworks that can inform educational practices. However, the two we utilize - anti-racism and anti-deficit - provide insight into how systemic racism - the “ideological, cultural, and structural dimensions that encompasses hegemonic and normative beliefs, ideas, and concepts” (See Tevis & Croom, forthcoming), has manifested within this context, and in this instance, is specific to Black students. We specifically draw from anti-racism and anti-deficit frameworks, because they have been employed widely to call attention to and rectify the anti-Black bias that is prevalent in school systems. Anti-racism is defined by Dei (1999) as “an action-oriented educational strategy to deal with race, difference and interlocking oppressions” (p. 396). Anti-deficit suggests a need to challenge deficit

manifestations. Most germane to our analysis is deficit thinking, which Ford et al., (2006) defined as “negative, stereotypical, and prejudicial beliefs about a diverse group” (p. 176). Given the focus of the current study, the use of these particular anti-oppressive frameworks overlap in a way that if applied in the most informative outlets pertaining to college access and advising could shed light on what explicit actions would inform the behaviors and practices of college counselors and advisors in supporting, for example, Black students in their educational journeys.

Anti-Racism

Across the vast body of anti-racism literature (See Bonnett, 2000; Dei, 1999a; 1999b; Gillborn, 2004; Gillborn, 2006), one could gather, that first and foremost, practitioners should acknowledge that racism is real, and that White Supremacy is deeply ingrained within U.S. educational systems. As such, educators are then encouraged to critically examine the ways in which unconscious (and perhaps conscious) racism is both systemic and manifested within individuals. Further, within this examination, there is a need to be mindful, as articulated earlier, that racism differs across racial and ethnic groups. Relatedly, there is also a need to understand how intersectional characteristics compound the effects of racism, for example, gendered-racism (See Essed, 1991). Additionally, educators need to explore and question organizational practices and policies that are also perpetuating the racist foundation on which America’s educational system was built. Because U.S. educational systems are

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built on the ideals of White Supremacy, more often than not there is a tendency for these spaces to erase cultural identities or fail to address student-body diversity. Gillborn (2006) expressed “that if antiracist research and practice are to survive and flourish we must learn from the errors of the past and adapt to the new realities of the present” (p. 1). Hence, there is a need to speak to a systems approach, rather than an individual one, as it pertains to Black students, to address the alienating effects of educational policies and practices, specifically challenging bias, stereotypes, and discrimination to fully address, again, the racism steeped within.

Anti-Deficit

An anti-deficit approach also takes actionable steps to disrupt systems, rather than focus on individuals.

The deficit thinking model, at its core, is an endogenous theory - positing that the student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest, it is alleged, in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn and immoral behavior (Valencia, 1997, p. 2).

Such thinking influences behaviors (Ford et al., 2006), which are taken up in a way that then maintains systemic inequality. Harper (2010) explained, in his development of “An Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework for Research on Students of Color in STEM,” how, in this instance, students can take action, specifically to overcome ideological and

structural barriers to achieve and persist in fields riddled with what Ford (2014) referred to as deficit-oriented paradigms. While work in this area is longstanding and has advanced, it has “[contributed] to growing confusion and misinterpretation within this literature” (Davis & Museus, 2019, p. 119), which could be an impediment to educators in developing effective strategies. To address this, in their analysis of anti-deficit thinking, Davis and Museus (2019) present four themes - “a blame the victim orientation, a grounding in larger complex systems of oppression, a pervasive and often implicit nature, and effects that reinforce hegemonic systems” (p. 121) that surely bring clarity to the “nature and impact” of the concept. These overlapping ideals bring to the forefront the constancy of interlocking systems of oppression (e.g. classism and racism) as well as other marginalizing ideologies (e.g. meritocracy and colorblindness) that perpetuate inequality. Again, since America’s educational systems are plagued by the ideals of White Supremacy, the practices of racism, and accompanying beliefs that determine the behavior of educators, then it would be fitting to apply anti-deficit thinking to educational practices, particularly challenging the deficit perspectives related to Black students in the college advising process.

Methodological Approach

A systematic review is “a literature review that is designed to locate, appraise, and synthesize the best available evidence relating to a specific research question in order to

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provide informative and evidence-based answers” (Boland et al., 2017, p. 2). In this instance, we were able to assess prior literature that focuses on the college advising process to explore the extent to which researchers center Black students and apply anti-oppressive frameworks.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To generate a dataset, we chose seven (7) leading, peer-reviewed journals that regularly publish research on college access and college counseling and advising: *Educational Researcher*, *The Review of Educational Research*, *The Review of Research in Education*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *Professional School Counseling Journal*, and *Journal of College Admissions*. Studies were included if they: (a) published in one of seven leading, peer reviewed journals identified above (b) were published between 2010 – 2020, and (c) topically related to college access and college advising and/or counseling.

We reviewed literature from 2010 – 2020, which spans pivotal legislation governing K-12 education, the last five years of the former No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2002) and the first five years of the current, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015). No Child Left Behind was signed into law in 2002. At its enactment, NCLB’s focus on accountability signaled great promise for K-12 education and commitment to closing the achievement gap between majority and minority students. NCLB’s goals centered on disadvantaged

populations (i.e., low-income students, racial/ethnic minority students, English second language learners, and students with disabilities; Klein, 2015). Furthermore, some researchers asked whether “school-level accountability under NCLB, intended to close gaps in K–12 education, might also work to close gaps in college participation” (Goldrick-Rab & Mazzeo, 2005, p. 109). However, “over time, NCLB’s prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators” (U.S. Department of Education, 2020, para. 4) and was succeeded by Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), signed by President Obama in December 2015. The ESSA “advances equity by upholding critical protections for America’s disadvantaged and high-need students and requires – for the first time – that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers” (U.S. Department of Education, 2020, para. 5).

Search Procedures

In designing this study, we established search procedures that began with engaging in a scoping search (Boland et al., 2017) to refine our research questions and establish our main search process to generate data. In this phase, we identified and refined key search terms for available literature within the identified journals, relying on extant literature and experiential knowledge to inform our choices. Our search terms included the following: advising, high school counseling, high school counselor, guidance counselor, school counseling, college counseling, college

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advising, college access, college admissions, race-based admissions, college readiness, and college choice. It is important to note that we understand the term guidance counselor is no longer used within the school counseling community as it does not encompass the many responsibilities of school counselors (See ASCA, n.d.). However, given the scope of this study, it is conceivable that relevant or related works may have used this term. To establish a baseline of internal consistency and refine search terms, two research team members reviewed the first journal together. We determined that this method of key term searching missed articles as search terms were not consistently applied, i.e., some articles met the criteria without the author's explicit use of the search terms. Therefore, we continued our project using a hand search strategy, which Boland et al. (2017) defined as "manual searches of electronic tables of contents of key journals to identify potential articles of interest" (p. 71-72). This process added value as the relevance of each journal article during the 10-year period was assessed using the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Data Extraction, Synthesis, and Representation

Data analysis began with an initial screening process following our main search process, in which we utilized hand searching. In this screening phase, we reviewed every article's title and abstract for the presence of a racial identity phrase central to our topic of interest (e.g., Black students, Students of Color) and a college access phrase (e.g., college readiness, college counseling, college choice) to establish

our final dataset. The research team independently screened each article in this phase, with each article being dual screened (Boland et al., 2017) to ensure suitability in the final data set. Empirical studies that included both phrases were included in our final dataset (see Table 1 for screening data summary).

Our next step of data analysis was data extraction, where we extracted relevant data from each study to answer the study's research questions. For example, to extract data related to the nature of representation, we recorded whether Black students were the focus of the study or grouped with other racial/ethnic minority students, the types of research methodologies used in these studies, and the scope of the investigation, i.e., college counseling/advising, readiness, access, choice, and/or transition.

A blended approach of content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and thematic analysis (Percy et al., 2015) techniques using inductive and a priori coding strategies were utilized in understanding the data to present a narrative synthesis of the data (Boland et al., 2017). Content analysis methods allowed us to interpret meaning when checking for existence or non-existence of key theoretical ideas; thematic analysis offered interpretative flexibility to identify patterns within the data and supportive evidence.

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Findings and Discussion

In this next section, we take an integrated approach to present our systematic review findings alongside interpreting the results and situating the results within the extant literature. We address the representation of Black students, the surfacing of anti-oppressive frameworks, and themes related to the research results of the college access and college counseling and advising literature. We close by illuminating the gaps in the advising and college counseling literature for Black students and offer implications of our review.

Representation of Black Students

Our first question focused on how Black students and their experiences were represented in the college access and college counseling and advising literature. Our initial scoping search yielded 86 results for articles that focused on college access and advising more generally. In the next phase, we reviewed these articles to ensure representation of Black students, and in so doing our sample was reduced to 14. We excluded three studies that were conceptual in nature, which lead to 11 articles in our final systematic review sample.

We then reviewed the articles to find what types of methods were used to study the topic, the population from which the research results were interpreted, and how Black students were included. Authors in our sample primarily utilized quantitative methods of inquiry (N=8); only two studies were qualitative in nature and one study

employed a mixed-methods approach. In seven of the studies, Black students were participants among other racial and ethnic groups; the Comeaux et al. (2020) research is the only study to include Black students exclusively. As a research team, we noted the coded and/or vague language of many of the articles. Authors used terms like "urban", "low-income", and "disadvantaged" when describing Students and Communities of Color or the school environment as a proxy for race, even when socioeconomic status was not a clear focus of the study. Vague language can prevent unique and tailored strategies (Vey & Love, 2020). Moreover, many of the studies did not focus exclusively on Black students, but instead were grouped with other historically marginalized or minoritized populations. We then looked deeper to determine the role of Black participants, i.e., how they were included.

There is a distinct difference in using Black students in an active role through participatory research methods such as interviews, pre/post intervention surveys, and focus groups (e.g., Malott et al., 2020) versus more passive roles through using student data from Black students, such as national datasets, test scores, grade point averages (e.g., Li & McKillip, 2014). The former allows for researchers to uncover Black students' experience and amplify their voices related to their college aspirations and college going process, whereas the latter does not allow for expansive understanding of the issues, influences, barriers, and opportunities related to college access. We are not

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Table 1.
Characteristics of Articles Meeting Inclusion Criteria.

Study	Publication	Methodology	Study Population	Theoretical Framework
Bryan et al. (2009)	Professional School Counseling Journal	Quantitative	12 th grade students across race	None identified.
Cholewa et al. (2015)	Professional School Counseling Journal	Quantitative	11 th grade students across race	Social Capital Theory
Comeaux et al. (2020)	American Educational Research Journal	Qualitative	Pre-college African American students	Critical Race Theory
Conger & Long (2013)	Educational Researcher	Quantitative	Public high schools students across race	None identified.
Flores & Park (2013)	Educational Researcher	Quantitative	Pre-college data across race	College Completion Trajectory Model; Human Capital Theory
Gandara & Rutherford (2020)	Educational Researcher	Quantitative	Postsecondary data across race	Principal-Agent Theory
Holcomb-McCoy (2010)	Professional School Counseling Journal	Quantitative	High school counselors	None identified.
Li & McKillip (2014)	Journal of College Admission	Quantitative	High school SAT takers across race	None identified.
Malott et al. (2020)	Professional School Counseling Journal	Mixed Method	12 th grade students across race	Intersectionality; Social Cognitive Career Theory
Moses & Wiley (2020)	American Educational Research Journal	Qualitative	High school students across race	Social Capital Theory; Social Context of Choice; Adaptive Preferences
Nice et al. (2020)	Professional School Counseling Journal	Quantitative	Middle, junior, and high school counselors	None identified.

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dismissing the value of survey research within this body of literature, as quantitative methods help researchers to describe broad patterns of the phenomenon and to investigate relationships between variables (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Yet, “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 6). Qualitative studies that focus on the experience of Black students in the college admissions process and their relationships with college advisors can highlight the issues (and opportunities) Black students face as they access postsecondary education. The more literature that is available that nuances Black student experiences and amplifies Black student voices, the more practitioners can inform their practice to fit a specific form of anti-racism praxis, one that addresses anti-Blackness, and disrupts deficit thinking.

Themes in College-Going Process for Black Students Research

It is important to reiterate that Black students were underrepresented as a unit of the analysis in the majority of the articles we examined. That being said, there are very few findings, results, and/or broad themes that can be specifically attributed to this population as it relates to the college advising process. Such elements are an integral part of a study as they reflect the relationship between a study’s purpose, its research question(s), theory, and methodology. Additionally, they inform the development of

broader implications for both practice and future research. This means the findings generated from prior research, in this instance, have the potential to impact Black students’ transition to college in ways that could disrupt their being disadvantaged along the education pipeline (See Ladson-Billings, 2012). However, lack of findings in this area, has the potential to perpetuate disparities in educational outcomes for this group, and maintain the status quo. A critical review of the most relevant literature focused on Black students and college advising, mentioned above, yielded only three studies that attributed findings to Black students. In these studies, both explicit and implicit, it was clear the authors were cognizant of the historical realities that shape these students’ educational experiences. The oldest of the three studies, Flores and Park (2013), focused on whether being enrolled at a minority-serving institution (MSI) has any bearing on minority students' experiences. Though not solely focused on Black students, the authors did attribute findings and implications specific to this group, and considered Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) as part of their analysis. Their enrollment pattern reflected these students either did not enroll in college over a 10 year time span or they choose to enroll in two-year colleges, yet not those designated Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), and do so over HBCUs. In 2008, there were a fair number of Black students who did enroll in four-year institutions, however, HBCUs were still their least explored option. This desire to attend community colleges has then surfaced

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a need to explore two-year institutions where Black students have been consistently overrepresented since 2009 (Monarrez & Washington, 2020), “a growing yet somewhat under evaluated sector of higher education” (Flores & Park, 2013, p. 123).

Malott et al. (2020), also attribute findings to Black students, yet mostly focused on the generational status of students. The authors found that group intervention, particularly discussions, altered students’ perspectives and their behaviors, after engaging with currently enrolled students and faculty. Hence, Malott et al. found group intervention beneficial for Black students. The authors do posit that “this study is the first of its kind to assess African American youths’ experiences of a college preparatory group intervention tailored for prospective first-generation college students within an urban setting” (p. 10).

Lastly, Comeaux et al. (2020) examined the educational journeys of high achieving Black students with the intent of challenging the University of California system’s admissions practices and decisions juxtaposed these students' acceptance and enrollment choices. The findings from this study are vast, and include the significance of having attended well-resourced schools, which yielded more college options, navigating a positive campus climate, and having a critical mass of Black students. It is worth noting, that similar to Malott et al. (2020), generational status mattered; and the authors did make mention of HBCU’s like Flores and Park (2013). The

implications of this work speak directly to the importance of race and racism in Black students' college-going process as well as race-neutral policies in college admissions decisions.

Surfacing of Anti-Oppressive Frameworks

As previously mentioned, anti-oppressive frameworks is a broad umbrella term that includes critical, emancipatory, anti-racist, and anti-discriminatory frameworks. In this study, we specifically focused on how anti-racism and anti-deficit frameworks surface in the college access and college advising literature, yet we also found evidence of anti-classism (n=1) and anti-ableism frameworks (n=1). Anti-oppressive frameworks were evidenced in six of the articles, yet the use of an anti-deficit or anti-racism perspective was not clearly articulated across all of them. Instead, the research team interpreted their use in contextual statements of research or study implications. As future research studies are conducted, it is imperative that scholars name, utilize, and advance anti-oppressive frameworks and practices. When the frameworks that scholars use do not acknowledge the systemic causes of educational disparities and inequities, it impedes systemic solutions (Vey & Love, 2020). The Comeaux et al. (2020) article presented the most clear interrogation of race and racism in their qualitative study of high-achieving Black students.

A noteworthy observation of this systematic review is that none of the quantitative studies identified a theoretical or conceptual

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framework that served as an critical analytic frame for their study, in contrast to the qualitative studies. Instead, they outlined the topical areas that aligned with the research questions or utilized frameworks that may uphold deficit thinking (e.g., social capital theory), rather than advance asset-minded perspectives. Adopting anti-oppressive frameworks and using them analytically can help to avoid missed opportunities to address issues of disparity, equity, and racial bias.

Black students are not a monolithic group and it is important to interrogate the intersections of their identity. The studies that advanced anti-classism and anti-ableism offer critical perspectives to juxtapose with anti-racism frameworks. College counselors should understand the context and intersectionalities of their students and their practices should attend to issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, among other things to ensure anti-racist and culturally responsive praxis (Bryan et al., 2009).

Gaps in College Advising and Counseling Literature

In answering the final research question, we put forward implications for future research related to representation, disaggregation, and application. Through an anti-oppressive lens, our analysis has revealed, first, a need for

more research focused on college advising and Black students. Prior research continues to demonstrate myriad challenges Black students face along the educational pipeline (Ladson-Billings, 2012), which conceivably affects their transition to college process, far beyond the more common transitional challenges related to academic and social adjustment, time management, and being away from family. Hence, an increase in research in this area, and across intersecting characteristics, could inform educators about diversifying their approach to college

advising, and further inform how to remove barriers in the college-going process for this population who desires to attend college more than any other group. Furthermore, increased work in this area could yield how those Black students who successfully transition and navigate higher education environments overcame challenges that are seemingly beyond their control, which

aligns with an anti-oppressive approach. Second, within this suggestion to increase research about college advising and Black students, there is a need to disaggregate Black student participants, specifically between Black identified males and Black identified females, and again, across intersecting characteristics. Prior scholars (Patton et al., 2016; 2017; Patton & Croom, 2017) have expressed that Black girls' educational journeys are under-researched, and as such,



“Black students are not a monolithic group and it is important to interrogate the intersections of their identity.”

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require more attention to inform educators and practitioners about what may be a distinct transitional process. For example, the limited research that centers Black girls, does reveal they are out pacing their male counterparts, across educational contexts (See Snyder et al., 2019). Yet, much is foreclosed, in this instance, without an anti-oppressive analysis, particularly about context, climate, and their experiences. Moreover, while higher education research pays a significant amount of attention to Black males, prior research has surfaced that they lack representation in STEM majors (See USNews and World Reports, 2015). Therefore, a disaggregated analysis of Black students would greatly benefit these groups, respectively.

Third, given the racist history by which U.S. educational systems were established, a focus on Black students both collectively and separately requires the application of anti-oppressive lenses, particularly anti-racism and anti-deficit to affect student interaction and experiences. As previously stated, these frameworks reveal systemic challenges, specifically, those deficit ideals, in this instance, about Black students, that are explicitly tied to White Supremacy and racism, that have manifested within educational practices. Additionally, these theoretical perspectives also require educators, as well as students, to take actions that directly disrupts anti-Blackness, and shifts toward an asset-based approach. In utilizing these two frameworks – anti-racism and anti-deficit – scholars, practitioners, and

policymakers begin to surface anti-Black bias and related practices.


Limitations

The discussions of this study should be considered in light of the boundaries and limitations of the data and review process. First, we did not include grey literature which Boland et al. (2017) defined as evidence and literature not controlled by commercial publishers. As a result, we excluded association magazines and other publications, such as newsletters, reports, dissertations or theses, and conference proceedings that also serve as a resource for disseminating college counseling and advising literature. The benefit of grey literature is the inclusion of diverse evidence sources and more comprehensive findings that reflect all available literature; yet the challenges related to locating and accessing these data sources outweighed the potential contribution to our present study. Thus, our findings do not reflect all available literature. Next, we did not combine our studies in a meta-analysis, which may be an appropriate analytic decision in systematic review, given that our data included both qualitative and quantitative studies and exploratory questions that primarily focus on the framing of research studies, rather than the findings.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this systematic review is to discern and critically analyze the college access, college counseling, college advising

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research that center Black students, found in academic journals. We pay particular attention to how this body of work is informed (or not) by anti-oppressive frameworks. Across our extensive analysis, our findings reveal there is more work to be done, particularly focusing on representation, disaggregation, and application. Therefore, quantitatively or qualitatively, we encourage scholars going forward to explicitly utilize frameworks that push against anti-sentiment. This line of inquiry has taught us there is a sustained benefit to college advisors gaining a deeper understanding of how to better support Black students' educational trajectories. 

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