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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

EXAMINING EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN MEN OF  
COLOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS AT A 2-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy

by

Ashley Michelle Young

August, 2016

Joseph D. Green, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Ashley Michelle Young

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my two beautiful sons, Blaise and Blake. You have seen me work endless hours and propelled me to push forward on this journey every day I wake up and see your faces. Thank you both for your patience and understanding that mommy did this for all three of us and I promise many days of Disneyland going forward. I love you both so much; words can never truly express how many beats my heart beats for you both.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my parents, Johnnie and Lydia Young. Thank you for your unconditional love and consistent support in helping me get through this process. I love you both.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my brothers Kyle and Jeremy. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. To my nieces and nephews, who may not know now, but this dissertation is also for you. I hope that you are all inspired by this journey I have forged.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge first, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without faith, I would not have made it through this journey. I am ever so grateful for His continued guidance and love.

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I would also like to acknowledge countless confidants, friends, and co-workers for supporting me through this journey, encouraging me to continue and see the light at the end of the tunnel, assisting me, listening to me and understanding when I could not be present at social events. I am thankful for my support system and this is also dedicated to you.

## VITA

### EDUCATION

**Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy, 2016**  
Pepperdine University, West Los Angeles, CA

**Master of Science in Family and Consumer Science with an emphasis in Family Studies, 2011** California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA

**Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2007** University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV,  
Undergraduate School of Humanities

### CERTIFICATION

**Mediation and Conflict Resolution (ADR), 2015** California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### *Utilization Review Specialist*

Newport Academy, 2016-present

- Responsible for maintaining UR documents, case files and correspondence in an organized, confidential and secure manner.
- Communicates significant findings, including potential risk improvement issues to the Director of Utilization Review.
- Responsible for consulting with insurance companies and clinical team to evaluate appropriateness and level of care for complex or difficult cases.
- Complies with applicable legal requirements, standards, policies and procedures including but not limited to those within the Compliance Plan, Code of Ethics, and HIPPA Privacy Practices.
- Adheres to applicable legal requirements, standards, policies and procedures as specified within the Compliance Plan and Code of Ethics.
- Demonstrates an ability to effectively communicate utilization decisions to healthcare professions and develop collaborative treatment plans.
- Attend weekly clinical meetings

#### *Training Coordinator*

South Coast Behavioral Health, 2015-2016

- Develop, implement and deliver training programs for varying levels of staff at SCBH and SCBH GH.
- Develop and maintain continual education support materials to assist SCBH and SCBH GH staff.
- Consult with the managers and supervisors of SCBH and SCBH GH to assess training needs and develop programs to match employee needs.

- Continually evaluate procedures to monitor and analyze course effectiveness and update curriculum as needed.

***Executive Assistant***

South Coast Behavioral Health, 2014-2015

- Front Office Manager - Supervised administrative office staff, clinical documentation audits, and scheduler for private practice, executives and facilities.
- Human Resources – Oversaw human resource policies and practices with respect to recruiting, compensation, payroll, benefits, performance evaluations, career development, and employee performance feedback. Oversee organizational licensure and staff licensure is followed accordingly with regard to staff appointments, promotions, and tenure review, identifies and adheres to appropriate internal controls for organization and reporting structure; provides mechanisms to monitor and enforce compliance. Devise individualized training curriculum for employees and track employee goals.
- Corporate Compliance Officer - Create and revise policies and procedures, manager of health and safety.
- Utilization Review- daily, weekly, monthly UR reviews for patients, bill for services, meet with patients and attend Treatment Planning meetings to give updates on insurance status.
- Administrator- take minute meetings for all Executive level meetings, patient financial services, facility account manager, coordinate travel for executives, promotes a culture of “Service Excellence” throughout the organization, serves on various committees as requested.
- Business Management/Strategic Planning- Works with the Executive Director and leadership team to identify, develop and implement operational business plans and assist in the decision making of the organization. Develops and manages all aspects of organization budget including preparation, submission, maintenance, reporting and audits. Develops solutions to improve current business processes and make them more efficient. Establishes and maintains effective internal controls for finance, human resources and administration. Identifies and seizes opportunities to improve fiscal and operational performance for the facility.
- Quality Assurance and Improvement – master creator of clinical documentation, tracking systems and forms for the clinical program and operations of the facility.

***Day Rehabilitation Worker/QMHP***

Aviva Family & Children’s Services, 2012-2013

- Assisted in coordinating and supervising therapeutic daily activities for residential program while implementing individualized treatment goals.
- Gathered data and wrote clinical notes for Department of Mental Health.
- Provided guidance and resources to residents in transition to find employment, meet educational goals, and phase out of residential care.
- Created a “Life Book” recognized and approved by Community Care Licensing.

***Child Care Counselor-Teacher/Overnight Residential Counselor***

Boys Town, 2008-2010

Hillsides, 2010

Rosemary's Children's Services, 2010-2013

- Supervised adolescent clients and wrote professional incident reports/clinical notes.
- Administered medication to adolescent clients.
- Maintenance and audit of Medication Records.
- Transported youth to school, doctor's appointments, and home visits.
- Acted as an advocate in team decision meetings and IEP's for clients.

## **ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

### ***VISTO Intern, Functional Family Therapy***

Los Angeles County Probation Department, 2011

- Monitored school attendance and absences and collected program data.
- Co-facilitated home visits between juvenile probationers and parents.
- Created and updated referral list for parenting classes, substance abuse courses, tutoring, etc.
- Scheduled weekly appointments for Deputy Probationer Officers.
  
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with a high degree of professionalism and competence in confidentiality and HIPPA compliance: Dealing with a variety of individuals including physicians, university administrators, community agencies, families and children.
- Preparation and analysis of operating budgets and capital equipment evaluation.
- Leadership and management skills sufficient to effectively direct and develop administrators, managers, and support staff as appropriate.
- Senior-level administrative experience in a medium-sized behavioral and substance abuse medical/clinical facility.

## **RELEVANT COMPUTER PROFICIENCIES**

*PC/Macintosh:* Word, Power Point, Excel, and Entourage

*Online learning:* TurnItIn, Sakai, Blackboard, AdWords, Google Drive

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

Kappa Omicron Nu, Honor Society, 2011-present

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate which of the 7 motivational factors measured in the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey developed by Phinney, Dennis, and Osorio (2006)—career/personal, humanitarian, prove worth, default, expectation, encouragement, and help family—if any, contribute to African-American male and Latino male community college completion/graduation at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer to 4-year universities. This study employed a survey design and the target population included MOC that were enrolled in a community college in Southern California. This study used a quantitative, correlational method to measure men of color (MOC) students' perceptions of persistence, academic success, and motivational factors related to enrollment and persistence at a community college in Southern California. The participants were selected through non-probability sampling in a non-controlled setting utilizing the target population from a community college in the South Bay area of Southern California. The population of African-American and Latino males is steadily rising, thus increasing the prevalence of these 2 ethnic groups at 2-year community colleges. An extensive literature review demonstrated that both male African-American and Latino community college students are the most prominent groups by ethnicity and gender, yet both groups are the least likely to graduate and transfer to 4-year universities. After reviewing the literature regarding MOC in postsecondary education and considering the findings from this study, the foremost leading motivational factor for male African-American and Latino community college students to enroll and persist in college is their desire and priority to help improve the condition of their family's financial status. The second highest rated motivational factor for MOC to enroll and persist in community college is based on their career/personal goals and pursuits. The least motivational factor

promoting academic success for these 2 male racial/ethnic groups included feeling pressured by friends and feelings that they had no other alternatives.

## **Chapter 1: Background of the Study**

Male minority students have consistently and persistently failed to rise above and cross the threshold of higher education degree attainment in large quantities as other ethnic subgroups and their female counterparts have (Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015). Research shows that African-Americans are the most likely demographic to attend community colleges and forego the traditional entrance to a 4-year university after obtaining a high school diploma or other certificate (i.e., GED; Land, Mixon, Butcher, & Harris, 2014; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2011; Wilson, 2014) for numerous reasons, with the most commonly found reason being inadequately prepared for college (Graham, 2013; Land et al., 2014; Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Strayhorn, 2012). Additionally, Black males are the most prominent demographic group to enroll in community colleges based on gender and ethnicity (Graham, 2013; Wilson, 2014; Wood, 2012). However, African-American male community college students are the least likely of all other ethnic groups to obtain a 2-year degree or complete a 2-year community college program and successfully transfer to 4-year universities to obtain a higher educational degree within the 6-year benchmark allotted to them (Wilson, 2014). California community colleges should invest more effort in collaborative and inclusive measures to support, develop, and retain male minority students. These efforts should help reframe the community college structure and experience for this largely represented population—male minorities on the campuses of California community colleges—to support their success and achievement of higher educational degrees.

### **Problem Statement**

Presently, very few quantitative studies on men of color (MOC) exist that focus on community college students from at-risk or low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds



measuring educational motivational factors and persistence. Thus, a great deal of information remains to be known about male African-American and Latino community college students. Many quantitative studies have used Tinto's theory of student retention, which does not measure self-perception of student success and motivational factors (Harris & Wood, 2013). However, this research study quantitatively measured MOC (African-American and Latino) community college student motivational factors and their perceptions on enrollment and college completion at a community college in Southern California using a 33-item measurement instrument, the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU; Phinney et al., 2006). A quantitative method was selected due to the generalizability of the proposed research findings (Yilmaz, 2013).

It is also equally important to investigate if any programs, policies, and/or institutional practices can encourage these students to comfortably and efficiently access all aspects of postsecondary education (Harper & Griffin, 2011). In contrast, there are several key issues with qualitative studies on minority community college students; one main problem lies within the data collection procedures of these studies (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). The data for numerous studies on African-American and Latino male community college students are first collected from U.S. Census data tools, then the data are synthesized, and finally the data are aggregated in the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) annual Digest of Educational Statistics, which is highly credible (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). However, the national source for higher education data only accounts for first-time community college students, failing to take into account part-time, re-entry, or community college transfer students. Community colleges are easily accessible in low SES communities and minority students can access courses more readily than traditional 4-year Predominantly White Institution (PWI) universities, which could be a cause for early

dropout rates and data not accurately depicting academic success (i.e., program completion or transfer after 2-year coursework completion) among students of color, primarily MOC (African-American and Latino students) upon academic status change (i.e., from full-time student to part-time student status), re-entry, or transfer from other colleges.

Various systemic, multi-institutional studies have been conducted focusing on low-income and underprepared students (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). However, there is still no long-term, multi-institutional solution for supporting, developing, and retaining California's African-American male and Latino male community college students from inception to completion of a higher educational degree, regardless of level of preparation.

Studies show that students who attend 2-year community colleges with greater levels of academic and social integration are considerably more likely to have transfer goals than their peers (Mason, 1998; Wilson, 2014; Wood, 2012). Many states have created programs for student engagement as a response to this phenomenon, but have yet to discover what prominent motivational factors exist within these populations (African-American and Latino male community college students) pertaining to attainment of a postsecondary degree. Flowers's (2006) study on the effects of attending a 2-year institution on African-American males' academic and social integration in the first year of college examined precollege characteristics, institution characteristics, and college experiences to gain insight on how these interactions may positively influence the persistence and retention of college students as a whole (Harris & Wood, 2013). Still, the Flowers study failed to account for MOC community college students' motivational outlook

on their college experiences. To further gain insight into student persistence and college retention of students, Flowers might have utilized a mixed methods approach and introduced a measurement tool along with interview and observation data to determine if there was a correlation between precollege characteristics and actual first year college experiences. Many low SES college students are underprepared for postsecondary education and may not understand collegiate processes within their first year, particularly if the community college lacks adequate academic advising, counseling services, and social clubs or sports teams.

Academic and social integration play a major role in student assimilation to a new environment such as the community college setting, but as Tinto's (1975) theory suggests, students must depart from all prior environments, such as home and high school, in order to be successful in their new setting, and Tinto's theory has been consistently criticized, because prior influences and connections can be seen as motivational factors that increase academic success for students. Yet, more recently, researchers have begun focusing their attention on understanding the roles of families on academic achievement and persistence patterns, particularly in minority college-going populations (Palmer et al., 2011). There is much left to be understood regarding why both male African-Americans and Latinos who enroll in 2-year community colleges lack the motivation to complete a college program and/or transfer to 4-year universities.

The disproportion is shown annually in the national college graduation rates for minorities. Black men graduated at 33.1% compared with 44.8% for Black women in 2012, according to the U.S. Department of Education (as cited in Valbrun, 2015). However, in comparison to other male counterparts, Asian American and White males are also

outperforming African American and Latino male, college-going students. Shockingly, in 2007, it was found that the ratio of Latino males incarcerated to those in college dormitories was 2.7 to one, with an estimated 63.1% of this demographic being between the ages of 18 to 24 (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Nationally each year, 54.9% of African-American males transition from high school and enter into 2-year community colleges (Wood & Williams, 2013), which presents a remarkable disparity in African-American males being successful in attaining a college, which Valbrun (2015) reported to be at 33.1% in 2012. Like African-American males, Latino males face a similar issue with respect to disproportionate rates compared to their female peers regarding both college access and degree attainment (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

Nationally, college professionals have become progressively alarmed about MOC student success. This concern stems mostly from an unparalleled experience of student success for MOC compared to their female counterparts and men from privileged backgrounds (Wood & Harris, 2013). White males and African-American females are enrolling in 2-year community colleges at an almost equal rate as African-American males, yet African-American males are graduating and transferring to universities at a much lower rate than their female counterparts and other male ethnic groups (Mason, 1998; Wilson, 2014). Enrollment rates for other ethnicities and African-American females are almost mirroring those of African-American males; however, what motivates an African-American and Latino male to complete a program with a degree is the overarching issue yet to be addressed (Palmer et al., 2011; Wood, 2012), since their counterparts are proving to persist and attain postsecondary degrees. It is imperative to examine the motivational factors that lead to enrollment and lack of completion or transfer rates for this population.

Many states such as New York and Georgia have started initiatives that target this issue, but California has yet to follow suit. There is also no centralized program that caters to college student success (i.e., transfer, completion, degree attainment) for all students (Gibson, 2014). Many studies in this area are qualitative and do not measure the levels of motivation for African-American and Latino male community college students (Sawyer & Palmer, 2014). Thus, the opportunity exists to investigate and study quantitatively the values and levels of motivation experienced by both male African-American and Latino community college students.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational research study was to investigate which of the seven motivational factors measured in the SMAU survey developed by Phinney et al. (2006)—career/personal, humanitarian, prove worth, default, expectation, encouragement, and help family—if any, contribute to African-American male and Latino male community college completion/graduation at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer to 4-year universities. Most research on African-American and Latino male community college students is qualitative, lending a critical opportunity to conduct quantitative research on African-American and Latino male community college students' motivational levels as they pertain to higher education (Harper & Griffin, 2011; Mason, 1998; Sawyer & Palmer, 2014). Quantitative research investigates social phenomena or human problems by employing a method using variables that can be measured numerically, then analyzed to determine if the proposed theory explains or predicts the phenomenon of interest (Yilmaz, 2013).

## **Importance of Study**

This study is important at this pivotal time because of the extensive annual enrollment rate in higher education of both African-American and Latino males and the low academic success, graduation, and transfer rates of these two male ethnic groups in college (i.e., 2-year degree or transfer to a 4-year university and obtainment of a degree within 6 years). In Glazer's (1982) study on the Higher Education Opportunity Program at New York University, disadvantaged students were of high priority and legislative statutes from 1964 through 1969 supported and encouraged participation of minority students in both public and private universities. With the minority population steadily increasing, a paradigm shift among higher education institutions and institutional professionals should transform existing policies to fit the needs of and provide adequate support for economically and educationally disadvantaged students.

Perrakis (2008) conducted a quantitative study on factors promoting academic success among two populations: African-American and White male community college students. The results of this study offered implications for future study that consisted of evaluating old policy and creating new policies that explore the role of academic diversity in college enrollment and retention. Perrakis concluded that beyond race and gender, more funding should be provided for students of color who may also be at-risk and academically underprepared for postsecondary success, and additional administrative expertise is required to identify and understand the academic spectrum of students who attend college classes within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and similar other community college districts with a large population of urban students.

This study may serve to enhance the literature on MOC self-perception regarding motivational factors (e.g., motivation to enroll in and complete college), persistence, and transfer rates within community colleges. While this study sought to gain further insight on two specific ethnic groups that identify as MOC, African-American and Latino males, there is a substantial gap in research surrounding MOC in community colleges from men who also identify as being MOC, but are from different ethnic groups such as Asian American and Native American (Harris & Wood, 2013). The findings of this study may contribute information to high schools with male students of color to proactively guide, nurture, and prepare this population for academic success in higher education.

Wilson (2014) found that higher SES showed a positive correlation to attainment of a postsecondary degree. This fact lends an opportunity to focus on low SES groups with limited resources and identify tools that would prepare students to become successful in postsecondary educational settings. Additionally, this study will seek to link findings to resources that may foster mentoring and bridge programs (e.g., summer programs after high school graduation prior to college enrollment) to further prepare both male African-American and Latino students and promote relationships and partnerships between high schools and community colleges (Gibson, 2014). Gibson's (2014) study on mentoring programs for African-American male community college students determined that without instituting mentoring programs imminent issues would arise, such as a deficiency of career readiness, opportunities for growth in the workplace and college graduation rates will decrease significantly. Gibson failed to account for the growing male Latino population and may have included this ethnic group as a comparison to what was experienced in and gathered from the African-American male population.

This study sought to gain insight into what motivates and engages African-American and Latino males to enroll in a community college utilizing quantitative procedures. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was the theoretical framework used to analyze human subjects' perceptions regarding what factors motivate them to enroll in and desire to complete a 2-year community college program. Also, this study sought to identify the motivational factors that contribute to African-American and Latino males' completion of a 2-year college program or transfer to a 4-year university, which may contribute to a larger body of knowledge on motivational characteristics for MOC in higher education. This study may further help practitioners and institutional professionals motivate and inspire MOCs to transfer into 4-year universities and create outreach programs that are based on student perceptions of success in high schools and community colleges. Ultimately, the importance and significance of this study was to discover what motivates African-American and Latino males in Southern California to enroll in and/or transfer from a 2-year community college program to a 4-year degree granting institution, successfully completing the program, graduating, and obtaining a postsecondary degree.

### **Definition of Terms**

Many terms are used throughout this dissertation that are interchangeable or unknown to the reader. Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, definitions of key terms will be provided subsequently.

- *Academic success* will be used to describe academic achievement, attainment of learning objectives, acquisition of desired skills and competencies, satisfaction, persistence, and post-college performance (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015).



- *African-American* or *Black* will be used interchangeably to describe the population of focus in this study and is defined as a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).
- *California Community Colleges*, often referred to in this study as 2-year community college programs, are schools that students attend after high school and offer courses leading to an associate's degree, certificate, and/or transfer credits to attend a 4-year university. Some literature reviewed may also describe community colleges as junior colleges. The California Community College system is the largest system of higher education in the nation, with 2.1 million students attending 113 community colleges. California Community Colleges provide workforce training, basic courses in English and math, certificate and degree programs, and preparation for transfer to 4-year institutions (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.).
- *HBCU* refers to *historically Black college or university*. These colleges were created as an institutional structure that foster and nurture supporting Black college students (Flowers & Palmer, 2015).
- *Latino* will be used to describe the population of focus in this study and is defined as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).
- *MOC* refers to the men of color sampled for the present study, which include African American and Latino males (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014).

- *Motivation*, for the purpose of this study, is a force or influence that causes someone to do something (Wood, Hilton, & Hicks, 2014) or “to seek reward and avoid punishment” (Pink, 2011, p. 18).
- *Perception* is defined as the ability to have personal control over lifestyle pursuits through a mental capacity (Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015).
- *PWI* refers to Predominantly White Institutions (Sawyer & Palmer, 2014).
- *Self-Determination Theory (SDT)* is a theory based on empirical elements of human behavior and personality. SDT focuses on social aspects of behavior contextually and distinguishes motivation in terms of being autonomous and controlled (Deci & Ryan, 2001).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was used to measure male African-American and Latino community college students’ self-perceptions on educational motivation. SDT is an empirical theory that focuses on human behavior and personality, that is present in social contexts and distinguishes motivation in terms of being autonomous and controlled (Deci & Ryan, 2001). SDT adopts an evolutionary approach, which means that humans are inherently active, intrinsically motivated, and oriented toward developing naturally through integrative processes (Deci & Ryan, 2001). Most educational research employs intrinsic motivation as the driving force for success or lack thereof for college-going students; however, extrinsic motivation is the second form of self-determined motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), which measures behaviors by external rewards or consequences (Deci & Ryan, 2001).

Similarly, Tinto's (1975) model of student retention has been used in various studies on minority academic success and failure with college students. However, Tinto's model focuses widely on *integration*, which many researchers have found to be a main contributor to student success, college completion, and successful transfer rates. Although Tinto's theory has been criticized and literature reviews have shown the theory's inconsistencies and weaknesses, empirically the theory is the most commonly referred to model regarding student dropout/retention. Although this theory is the most commonly used in research based on college-going students of all ethnic origins, the present study added to the critiques of Tinto's theory. Since Tinto's theory does not provide an understanding of integrative processes or motivating factors surrounding college student success, it is limited to its assessment of student experiences with the college environment rather than focusing on the student's perception (i.e., belonging, commitment, and persistence), which may provide a deeper explanation for college completion and dropout rates (Deil-Amen, 2011).

Tinto's (1975) theory features two main aspects of integration: academic integration and social integration. Academic integration pertains to measurable behaviors such as grade and mark performance, subject satisfaction, identification with academic or institutional norms and values, and identification of role within academia (i.e., student self-perception) that impact student outcomes (Deil-Amen, 2011). Social integration pertains to areas such as social aptitude at the institution, individual contact with institution personnel, and institutional satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). The researcher compared the theoretical frameworks of both SDT and Tinto's theory with the findings from

surveying MOC students at a 2-year community college in Southern California based on postsecondary perceptions and motivational levels of education.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered as a result of this study:

1. What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for both African-American and Latino male community college students contributing to their enrollment in a 2-year community college?
2. Are any of the seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey (Phinney et al., 2006) related to their ethnicity?

### **Research Null Hypotheses**

The hypotheses related to the research questions were as follows:

1. The seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey (Phinney et al., 2006) for male Latino community college students will be significantly stronger than any of the factors compared to African-American male community college students.
  - a. Alternative 1. At least one of the seven motivational factors for Latino male community college students will be significantly stronger than at least one of the other seven factors for African-American male community college students.
    - i. Statistics Test: Repeated measures ANOVA with Bonferroni post hoc tests.
2. None of the seven motivational factors will be related to ethnicity.

a. Alternative 2. At least one of the seven motivational factors will be related to ethnicity.

i. Statistics Tests: Pearson correlations.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited, first, by its variables of self-perception and motivation, which cannot be generalized across various other ethnic groups and subgroups. The second limitation of this study is that the researcher focused on male African-American and Latino community college students in Southern California as well as on two specific subject demographic variables: ethnicity and gender. The data may not be generalizable across other MOC, different geographical regions, and females. Third, this study was also limited to self-disclosure of the identified target ethnicities, African-American and Latino. Some African-Americans and/or Latinos may identify with more than one race/ethnicity or be bicultural or multicultural, and thereby may or may not consider themselves African-Americans and Latinos, thus decreasing or skewing the amount of accessible subjects for this study and representable data.

The fourth probable limitation of this research study is gender. The researcher could not control for this limitation due to gender being a factor that can not be manipulated or assigned. The fifth limitation of this study is that the researcher was left to identify race/ethnicity for most of the participants due to there not being a option on the survey for the participants to self-select their ethnicity. This limitation is essential to note because, one can not infer solely based on skin tone alone another persons ethnicity. Additionally, self-reported data, such as race/ethnicity and age is a major limitation, because oftentimes individuals identify as more than one race or do not physically

present as the race they identify with as well not always disclosing true information about oneself. Self-reported data may include individuals in the study that may present as African-American or Latino but may be part of a separate race/ethnic group or that may be younger than 18 years old and still attending the community college.

### **Delimitations**

First, this study was delimited to a 2-year, degree granting community college in Southern California. The choice to survey MOC at one community college in Southern California stems from the large student body of African-American and Latino males on the campuses of California community colleges, including the chosen community college for the present study, as well as the researcher's access to prospective participants. Males at the target community college comprised of 49% of the entire student population in 2013, with Hispanic/Latino making up 48% of the entire community colleges population and Black or African American making up 17% of the total student body (El Camino College Community College [ECCCC] District, 2016). Secondly, this study was also delimited to California community college enrolled and attending African-American and Latino male community college students at the time of the survey distribution. Subjects who have previously been enrolled at the community college would not have been invited to participate in this study. There was a probability that the researcher or surveyor would encounter male African-Americans who had yet to enroll or commence college courses the following term, changed their status, or recently dropped their courses. However, the researcher allowed the participants to self-select whether they were enrolled at the target community college and measures to verify enrollment status were not employed in the present study.

The third delimitation of this study was the target population's self-perceptions of community college, views of success, and motivation level to complete college and transfer to a 4-year university. This delimitation is noteworthy, due to the various factors that may have attributed to participants feeling positively or negatively about community college and the factors that propelled them to enroll in community college, such as being ill-prepared to enroll and attend at a PWI or other 4-year university. Fourth, this educational research study was delimited to the SDT and critique of Tinto's (1975) model of student retention. The SDT is an empirical theory of human behavior which describes personality traits that become perceivable in social contexts (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Perceivable traits differentiate motivation in terms of being autonomous and controlled, which directly posits that students are motivated to enroll and attend in community college for some reason. Also, Tinto's model theorizes that in order for students to be successful in their new educational environments (i.e. community college), students must abandon all previous affiliations with past environments (i.e., home, high school) so that they can experience autonomy, integrate into the the new environment and achieve academic success. These two theoretical frameworks have guided the researcher into making inferences and conclusions about MOC community college student academic success based on the principles of each theory.

### **Assumptions**

The first assumption of this study, based on both male African-American and Latino educational motivational factors and self-perception of higher education may determine human behavior and personality differences and/or similarities in social contexts. Personality differences/similarities may differentiate motivation amongst these ethnic

groups in terms of being autonomous, controlled, innately active, inherently motivated, and oriented toward developing naturally through integrative processes based on SDT. The second assumption of this study was that the sample population would answer truthfully to the 33-item survey. Participants in this study were volunteers that did not receive any compensation or perks for participating in the present study and were also assured that confidentiality would be maintained and each participant had the ability to withdraw from the study at any time prior to handing in their survey to the researcher without any consequences. The third assumption of this research study was that the target population, African-American and Latino male community college students surveyed at one community college in Southern California, would be representative of the general population of these two ethnic groups within this geographical region.

### **Organization of the Study**

The following is an outline of the organization of this study. In Chapter 1, the researcher outlined the problem, contextualized the study, and provided an introduction to the basic components to be examined within the study. In Chapter 2, the researcher will outline the literature surrounding the variables for this proposed study. Historical, theoretical, and empirical literature will be reviewed. In Chapter 3, the researcher will outline a rationale for the methodological approach to be used, the research setting and sample will be described, and the data collection and analysis methods will be outlined clearly. In Chapter 4, the researcher will present the results of the study. Finally, in Chapter 5, the researcher will provide the summary and conclusion of the study. Recommendations for further study will also be outlined in the final chapter.



## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

The literature surrounding adult educational motivation on African-American and Latino males outlines several key components that have been identified as factors that determine the success for these two male demographic groups in the areas of academic achievement and retention rates. The primary factors to this success at community colleges (i.e., retention rates and 2-year college degree/certificate attainment) have been found to be personal motivation/perception (Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015; Wilson, 2014; Wood & Palmer, 2013), persistence (Thomas, 2000; Wood & Williams, 2013), social and academic integration (Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Perrakis, 2008; Wilson, 2014), being academically prepared (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Harris & Wood, 2013; Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Park, Holloway, Arendtsz, Bempechat, & Li, 2011; Wilson, 2014), support due to being at-risk (Land et al., 2014; Mason, 1998), support based on low income status (Harper & Griffin, 2011; Mason, 1998), parental support (Harris & Wood, 2013; Land et al., 2014; Palmer et al., 2011; Mason, 1998; Wilson, 2014), and mentoring programs (Gibson, 2014; Harris & Wood, 2013). SDT gives a detailed overview of how humans move through transitional life processes, such as shifting from high school and home to community college, by focusing on innate psychological needs. Deci and Ryan (2000, 2001) have studied innate psychological needs extensively by measuring human competence, autonomy, and relatedness based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

### **Self-Determination Theory**

SDT posits that individuals are inherently guided by innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 1995). SDT is a theory

derived from Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), which asserts that inherent psychological needs for competence and self-determination are underlying intrinsic motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2001; Gagne & Deci, 2005). CET will be discussed further in a later part of this study. To summarize, intrinsic motivation is the act of people engaging freely in activities that they find stimulating and that provide novelty and optimal challenge (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For minority populations such as male African-American and Latino community college students that have received notoriety due their disproportionate enrollment and completion rates, this population has been considerably unrepresented regarding measuring motivation levels.

While many other students of different ethnic backgrounds, even female African-American and Latino community college students, have shown success with transfer and completion rates of postsecondary education, African-American and Latino males appear to have an unparalleled perception and motivational outlook on their community college endeavors and end goals, unlike their female counterparts and other ethnicities, which may be why MOC enroll and do not complete community college or transfer to 4-year universities. African-American male community college students are more likely than their female counterparts to depart prematurely from community colleges (Wood & Palmer, 2013) and, after the first year of community college, 13% of Latino male community college students will have left college to never return (Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015). Figure 1 describes the aggregate data, which further confirm this statistic, as it has been reported that African-American males have the lowest persistence and attainment rates amongst all enrolled male peers; 42.2% of African-American males have either persisted or attained a degree within 3 years according to Wood and Palmer's (2013) study. Regarding all college

enrolled males, the data for African-American male peers shows that 53.2% of Latino males, 55.6% of White males, and 76.7% of Asian American males will have persisted or attained a degree within the same time frame (Harper & Griffin, 2011).

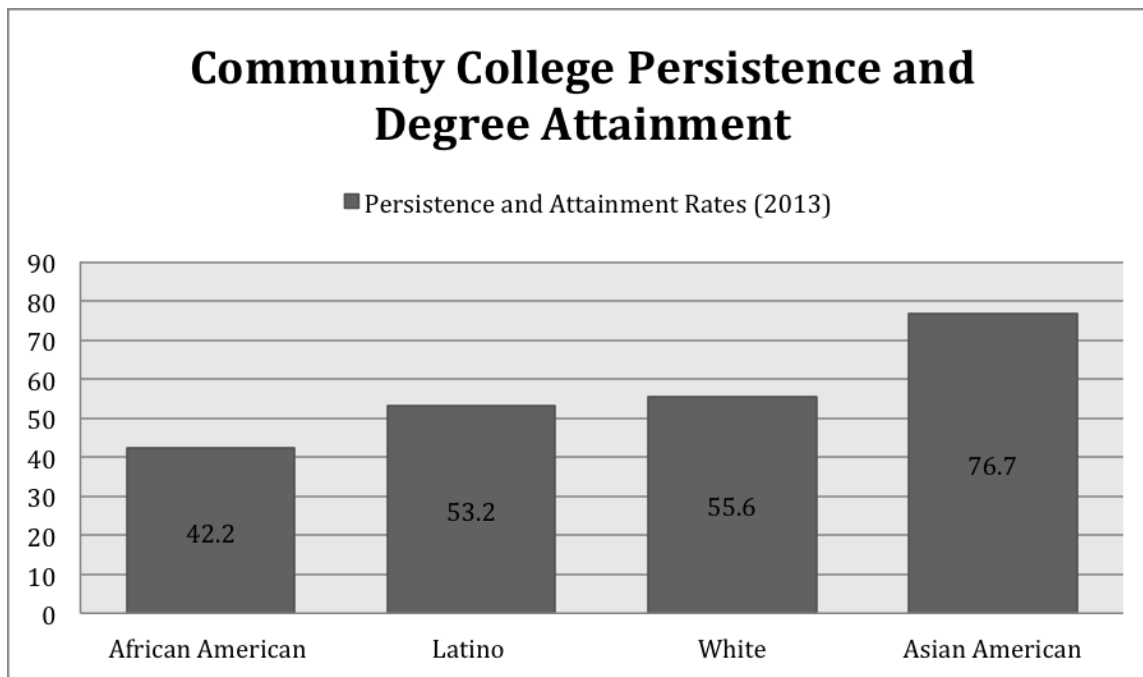


Figure 1. Community college persistence and attainment rates, 2013.

Social contexts, such as community colleges, and individual differences (i.e., being an underprepared, minority community college student), may encourage a person to facilitate naturally through growth processes, which can be described as innately motivated behavior and integration of extrinsic motivations, if one's basic needs are fulfilled and supported (i.e., autonomy; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Alternatively, individuals that are not autonomous, are not competent, or do not display relatedness to others are essentially linked with exhibiting poorer motivation, performance, and well-being than those that live lives that feature autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT plays a major role in human socialization and Niemiec et al. (2006) described how each component of the theory is necessary for college students.

First, autonomy is conceptualized as having a sense of choice, endorsement, and volition with respect to self-controlled behavioral engagement. Secondly, the need for competence is determined by individual perception of effectiveness when interacting with the social domain or physical world. Lastly, the need for relatedness is based on the warmth and care obtained from interacting with others, which results in a sense of belonging (Niemic et al., 2006).

Wood and Palmer (2013) found that Black males have the lowest graduation rates and retention rates among their peers. Not only are African-American and Latino male community college students not completing college at equal rates as their peers, these students are also not returning to college after a year or so (Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015). In a comparison study conducted by Wood in 2012a on Black male collegians compared to all other male collegians, it was found that Blacks and non-Black collegians had few similarities for reasons departing from college. It was concluded that family responsibilities were the most prevalent reason; however, the choice to depart from college for Black males is most likely done early on (i.e., in the first year) rather than later (Wood, 2012). Similarly, Vasquez Urias and Wood (2015) determined that social, cultural, and structural pressures, such as the need to work and support family, prevented Latino males from achieving their educational goals.

There is limited research exploring college students' personal goals, primarily in the community college setting. Although this study focused on African-American male and Latino male community college students' perceptions of educational motivation factors, Deci and Ryan (2000) stated that according to SDT, three core needs—competence, relatedness, and autonomy—can be fulfilled while engaging in a multitude of activities that

may differ perceptually among individuals and manifest differentially in various cultures. More importantly than perceptual manifestations of the three core needs, individual fulfillment is vital for the positive development and well being of all people, regardless of ethnic origin, background, or culture.

SDT proposes an effective structure for understanding the circumstances in which students are likely to become engaged at all levels of education, particularly the shift from high school to postsecondary education as it relates to the study at hand (Park et al., 2011). Of the numerous methodologies surrounding the study of academic motivation and engagement, Park et al. (2011) found that SDT views people as engaged in self-controlled and purpose-driven actions that are motivated by an inner need to feel autonomous, competent, and related. Autonomy being one of the key factors for motivation, especially in identifying goals and outcomes, has been shown to aid researchers in making predictions and measuring regulatory processes through which students achieve results (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Park et al., 2011). Further, as theorized by SDT, autonomy, as it pertains to learning, is promoted in circumstances where students have the choice of how to learn and what to learn, when students are able to collaborate in the decision making process about the conditions of their learning, and also when their learning efforts are moderately unrestricted from external controls (Park et al., 2011).

SDT provides an in depth understanding of motivation by using the concept of innate psychological needs as the foundation for associating goal contents, regulatory processes, and projections that result from identified distinctions of human behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The concept of innate psychological needs has a vast historical background, and a great number of psychological theorists have presumed that the mind contains its

own intrinsic principles that promote development, assimilation, and the resolution of psychological discrepancies and conflicts. Support for autonomy, competency, and relatedness is thought to be necessary for optimal functioning of these integrative processes (Ryan, 1995).

Figure 2 describes the continuum of three types of motivation, type of regulation, and quality of behavior. Amotivation can be described as having no interest or intent behind behavior (Müller & Louw, 2003). Amotivation, at the beginning of the continuum, is brought forth due to controlled circumstances and non-regulation, whereas intrinsic motivation, toward the end of the continuum, is regulated by self-determination or is internally regulated through autonomy, competency, and relatedness with others.

Type of Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Type of Regulation	Non-Regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Quality of Behavior	----- <i>Control</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----> <i>Self-Determination</i>

Figure 2. Continuum of self-determination. Adapted from *Conditions of University Students: Motivation and Study Interest*, by F. H. Müller and J. Louw, 2003, paper presented at the European Conference of Educational Research, University of Hamburg, Germany. Copyright 2003 by the authors.

SDT implies that at the outset of external regulations (i.e., performing some activity or task to gain a reward or avoid a negative consequence) accompanied by their implicit values, motivational factors can be internalized at varying degrees through processes of introjection, identification, and integration, which Figure 2 outlines (Niemic et al., 2006). Ryan and Deci (2000b) described *introjected regulation* as the act of behaving in a manner based on guilt or the act of behaving out of an obligation to prove something. *Identified*

*regulation* is when a person conducts himself/herself based on how he/she ascribes to particular behaviors out of importance and *integrated regulation* is behaving specifically due to behaviors being consistent with other goals or values (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

According to SDT, one central issue lies with individuals' perception of goal pursuit and attainment versus how individuals are capable of satisfying their primal psychological needs sought to pursue and achieve valued outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This significant issue, according to Deci and Ryan (2000), is that even though individual differences may exist in the strength of human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, the innate psychological differences on which researchers so commonly focus is not the most important place to concentrate a majority of the attention. Instead, Deci and Ryan believe it will be more advantageous and insightful to focus on individual differences, such as fatherhood, parental influence, at-risk status, motivational bearings, and the importance of goals. By concentrating on these factors, individual differences can be identified and conclusions about behavior can be derived from the interaction of human basic needs with the social world.

SDT has, however, upheld that a complete understanding of behaviors focused on goals, mental development, and well being cannot be achieved unless the needs that give goals their psychological strength is addressed. Also, thoroughly examining distinct influences through regulatory processes and how these processes might direct individuals' goal pursuits should be considered in what motivates individuals intrinsically and extrinsically. Specifically, SDT's three psychological needs—competence, relatedness, and autonomy—are necessary for understanding the *what* or the content and the *why* or the process of goal pursuits (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

## **Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET)**

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) was developed in 1975 after SDT was introduced (developed earlier in the 1970s) to explain how external consequences affect internal motivation (Deci, 1975). CET is outlined by social and environmental factors that enable versus challenge intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). CET posited that outside events' influences on intrinsic motivation—such as the act of offering rewards, deadline setting, and other motivational inputs—are a function of how a person perceives competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2001; Gagne & Deci, 2005). However, Deci and Ryan (2001) focused on CET only as an explanation for reward effects. CET views types of rewards and reward contingencies analytically to determine if the reward is likely to be perceived as informational-intrinsic or controlling-extrinsic. Deci and Ryan proposed that CET applies both to reward effects and the effects of many other external factors, such as evaluation deadlines, competition, and externally imposed goals (i.e., personal agendas and timelines), as well as to the overall environment and interpersonal settings, including but not limited to classrooms and schools.

CET additionally postulates that having a personal sense of competence cannot solely enhance intrinsic motivation, but for intrinsic motivation to flourish for individuals, it needs to be supplemented by a sense of self-sufficiency or an internal perceived locus of control (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Therefore, people need to experience their behavior as self-determined and not just as their being competent in order for intrinsic motivation to be evident (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Although CET is a subtheory of SDT created by Deci and Ryan, a second subtheory of SDT was created that is typically not employed in educational research on students. The



second subtheory introduced by Deci and Ryan in 1985 (Ryan, Williams, Patrick, & Deci, 2009) is Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). OIT is the framework for various forms of extrinsic motivation. The contextual factors of OIT either promote or hinder the internalizing and integration of the regulation of extrinsically motivating behaviors (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). OIT's continuum of autonomy supports the theory of extrinsic motivation and validates the idea that behavior is controlled by contingencies of reinforcement and punishment. The ideology of OIT suggests that the more autonomous an individual's behaviors are, the more likely the individual is to persist past obstacles, perform better, and have a more positive experience toward the activity being performed (Ryan et al., 2009).

## **Motivation**

Motivation is a psychological concept that is highly valued due to its consequence of producing outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Motivation as a concept is composed of energy, direction, persistence and equifinality, which include all aspects of activation and intention (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Activation and intention for individuals stem from external and internal motivational factors. The concept of motivation, as determined in the field of psychology, can be broken down into three domains: amotivation (lacking the intention to act), extrinsic motivation (performing an activity to achieve some external or separable outcome), and intrinsic motivation (performing an activity simply for the innate satisfaction of the doing an activity; Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Motivation is a force or influence that causes someone to do something; educational motivation could be caused by a host of reasons, such as personal career goals, establishing a better future for oneself and family, being held accountable to others

to succeed (i.e., making one's family proud), and being interested in one's academics (Wood et al., 2014). Overall, many modern principles of motivation indicate that individuals will initiate and persist at behaviors they believe will lead to preferred outcomes or goals, even if the behaviors themselves actually conflict with this notion (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As noted earlier, motivation is a concept derived from the field of psychology, and controversy has surrounded it. The controversy surrounding motivation lies in what has been demonstrated as adverse results of extrinsic rewards on students' intrinsic motivation to learn (Deci & Ryan, 2001). Deci and Ryan's (2000, 2001) investigations found that rewards were not always found to be positive motivators, and instead at times can be damaging to self-motivation, curiosity, interest, and persistence at learning tasks. Based on Deci's (1975) study and later reviewed in 2000, a clear definition of intrinsically motivated activities was offered as "those that individuals find interesting and would do in the absence of operationally separable consequences" (p. 56). Thus, Deci and Ryan (2001) posited that intrinsically motivated behaviors are grounded in individual desires to feel competent and autonomous.

The distinguishing factor that allows intrinsic motivation to be utilized in the educational sector over extrinsic motivation is to promote the act of doing activities for personal gratification rather than for separate consequences (Deci & Ryan, 2000). "Autonomous motivation involves behaving with a full sense of volition and choice . . . whereas controlled motivation involves behaving with experience of pressure and demand toward specific outcomes that comes from forces perceived to be external to the self" (Pink, 2011, p. 88). According to Ryan (1995), the view of synthetic integration in human behavior suggests that people are intrinsically motivated to extend themselves

into the world and integrate their own personal experiences; however, people only claim synthetic integration when autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported. In short, individuals seek to be the primary source for their actions oppose to having external forces regulate their behaviors regarding synthetic integration.

### **Student Integration Theory: Model of Student Retention**

Tinto (1975) formulated a Model of Student Integration, which theorized that students needed to abandon or reject socialization with their previous environments (i.e., home, high school) and conform to the norms of PWIs (Tierney, 1999). Tinto's model has been at the core of research conducted on student success (Harris & Wood, 2013), but research experts have rejected this theory as being applicable to college students outside the realm of PWIs inclusive of a residential component (i.e., dormitories). From a sociological perspective, this theory has been the "most studied, tested, revised, and critiqued" (Deil-Amen, 2011, p. 55) in the literature surrounding college student success and persistence. Tinto's theoretical framework has been criticized and rejected often, further studies have found that dismissing individuals' ethnic background and culture was the answer to success in postsecondary educational environments (Tierney, 1999; Wilson, 2014).

Further rejections of Tinto's theory derived from research on institutional climate and the role that institutions play in students' success and failure (Harris & Wood, 2013). Within Tinto's framework, two domains were established: *academic integration* and *social integration*. These domains could either be experienced by college students or considered lacking in the community college environment. A lack of integration can be described as isolation or incongruence, which could thwart commitment and lead to withdrawal, thus

decreasing persistence and reducing the likelihood of degree attainment (Deil-Amen, 2011).

Flowers (2006) analyzed Tinto's Model of Student Retention by measuring the effects of African-American males' attendance of a 2-year institution on academic social integration in their first year of college. Flowers found that informal educational experiences influence and cultivate students' commitment to all educational prospective, existing, and anticipated aspirations, as well as students' commitment to their educational institutions. However, it should be noted that student persistence decisions could be adversely influenced if these students lack significant and supportive academic and social integrative experiences (Flowers, 2006). Due to the consistent criticism and rejection of Tinto's Model of Student of Retention, Wilson (2014) merged two models based on student retention and found a simple explanation for how minority students succeed in higher education.

Wilson (2014) united Padilla's model of minority student success, created in 1999, and an element from Yosso's community cultural wealth model, later created in 2005, to frame his investigation on student retention. Padilla's model is based on minority student success, which suggests that minority students to apply prior knowledge when navigating through postsecondary education persist and earn a degree within allotted and traditional timeframes at 2-year community colleges and 4-year universities. Further, Yosso's model recognizes different forms of capital that minority students contribute to their collegiate experiences. Of the six various forms of capital, Yosso described aspirational capital as the most prevalent and meaningful, which Yosso believes communities of color foster, that

prevents minority populations from retaining hopes and dreams in spite of real and perceived barriers.

**Social integration.** Wilson (2014) found that besides poor academic performance, transition challenges could lead to social isolation, which may result in poor retention and low degree attainment rates among African-American and Latino male community college students. Research has shown that male students need to have a sense of attachment to the campus where they attend classes (Perrakis, 2008). Social integration refers to the extent to which students are connected to or spend time at the institution beyond the regular classroom setting (Harris & Wood, 2013). Wilson also found that unlike university enrollment, community college enrollment tends to mirror the population of the neighborhoods in which they are located (i.e., low SES neighborhoods). For students of color, adjusting to a less diverse campus environment may pose additional transition challenges, and research on how campus climate influences African-American experiences reveals how student perceptions of negative campus climates may hinder academic and social adjustment, undermine achievement, and lead to attrition. Harris and Wood (2013) conducted an in-depth analysis of literature on student success for MOC in community colleges. They found that community college students' personal choices to persist was in part by friendships, informal discussions with peers, and extracurricular activities (i.e., student organizations and college level sports teams), thus rejecting Tinto's model of student integration.

**Academic integration.** Following transition, academic and social integration strongly predict persistence and completion for ethnic students or students of color in higher education communities, such as community colleges (Wilson, 2014). A 2008 study

conducted by Perrakis examining factors that support academic success amongst African-American and White male community college students showed that meaninglessness and powerlessness are the primary factors that promote student alienation and contribute to attrition rates. This finding shows that there is a definite responsibility that institutions and faculty must accept to help students of color feel a sense of belonging in the absence of multicultural programs, social clubs and organizations, and organized collegiate sports teams.

Research shows that community colleges consistently remain the leading choice for postsecondary education among students of color, primarily for African-American and Latino students (Martinez & Fernandez, 2004; Perrakis, 2008). Although much of the research on student integration has been conducted utilizing data from residential, 4-year PWI universities, Deil-Amen's (2011) study on rethinking academic and social integration among 2-year community college students in career-related programs provided findings that were consistent with previous research showing that academic integration is more significant than social integration for community college students. However, academic integration took on a social role and became intertwined in the social integration realm, which led Deil-Amen to discover that the socio-academic integrative realm was most prominently indicated by the students within each of the 14 2-year colleges in the study as a precursor for persistence. Deil-Amen's findings further suggest that interracial interactions of minority students with faculty members and other students over academic matters, both in and out of the classroom, have a positive effect on self-concept, grades, and persistence at PWI 4-year institutions. This notion is further supported by Bush and Bush (2010) in their study examining African-American male achievement in community

colleges. In comparison to 2-year community colleges and PWIs, it is argued that HBCUs have greater success in educating African-American male students based on the institutional support they receive, which can be authenticated by the fact that HBCUs account for eight of the top 10 producers of engineers and the 42% of Blacks who have obtained doctorate degrees.

### **Persistence**

In developing a persistence model for MOC urban community college students, Mason (1998) conducted a longitudinal study based on previous research into student persistence guided by one geographical area at one community college. Mason considered several variables that have also been used in previous studies on the same and similar topics; the variables found to be prevalent for this demographic to develop predictive models of persistence behavior are background variables (i.e., age, enrollment status, educational goals), academic variables (i.e., academic advising, major certainty), and environmental variables (i.e., finances, employment, opportunity to transfer). It was found that, although many of these variables had statistical relevance to the persistence of African-American male community college students, the primary factor contributing to this population's persistence was educational goals (Mason, 1998). Unfortunately, the increase in college enrollment by African-American males is unmatched by degree attainment among most racial/ethnic minorities, especially Latinos and African-Americans (Strayhorn, 2012).

Racial discrimination can and may be a cause for low degree attainment and retention among minorities, but the main discriminating factor, according to Mason, is how students perceive their environment. If students are uncertain of their intent or goals, they

begin to identify themselves negatively and develop a high level of helplessness/hopelessness, which will lead to an increased tendency to forfeit college. Sáenz and Ponjuan (2011) reported that in 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau released data confirming Latinos/as had become the nation's largest ethnic minority group, totaling 50.5 million or one in six Americans. Although African-American males are the most likely ethnic group and gender group to attend 2-year community colleges, Latino males are just as likely to begin their postsecondary educational endeavors at community colleges, but Latino males are generally underrepresented in higher education (Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015). In a 2012 study by Vasquez Urias outlined in Vasquez Urias and Wood's 2015 study, data was presented to show that 71.3% of college-going Latino males will have attended a public, 2-year college, with only 26.4% enrolling in a PWI and 2.3% enrolling in a less than 2-year institution such as a specified or technical career college. Although these enrollment rates may appear statistically high, Latino males are not persisting in community college programs. Low persistence rates for Latino males have been attributed to social, cultural, and structural pressures. A 2015 study conducted by Tovar on the role of faculty, counselors, and support programs and the effects on Latino/a community college students' success and intent to persist found minimal, yet significant impacts on this group's persistence in community college with respect to support programs and interactions with instructional faculty outside of class lent a small but significant impact on GPA. However, this factor did not appear to contribute to persistence in college. Further research has found that one of the most influential factors for Latino/a community college persistence is academic performance (Crisp & Nora, 2010).



## **At-Risk**

College enrollment trends from 2000 to 2010 reveal greater African-American postsecondary participation, yet degree attainment rates still lagged behind enrollment gains (Wilson, 2014). Similarly, Latino male community college enrollment is projected to increase with an estimate of the United States' population projected to consist of 30% Latinos by the year 2050 (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Being at-risk or susceptible to failure may prevent minority students from achieving optimal success or achieving goals that are more easily accessed by their non-minority peers. Martinez and Fernandez (2004) asserted that students' cultural beliefs and norms need to be integrated into collegiate program curriculum, teaching strategies, and educational resources based on analysis of early studies showing a correlation of positive results between multicultural initiatives and students' perceptions of their competence and academic attainment.

In an extensive literature review of student success for MOC community college students, Glenn (as cited in Harris & Wood, 2013) found that the highest graduation rates for African-American males could be found among those who were offered and had access to academic advising services. The services were designated to freshmen and consisted of orientation courses that could be taken for academic credit, attendance monitoring, mandatory tutoring for students identified as at-risk, and counseling services that were advertised across campus. Martinez and Fernandez (2004) recommend community colleges move away from monoculturalism to multiculturalism. It is imperative to note the specialized factors that place African-Americans and Latino male students in the at-risk category. These factors include low SES, working-class, academically underprepared, and oftentimes first-generation students (Martinez & Fernandez, 2004).

Land et al. (2014) found that both supporting and hindering factors of their communities could potentially affect African-American male adolescents residing in inner-city public housing. This finding suggests that MOCs need a range of internal resources, including supportive families and communities that promote positive behaviors and decision-making skills that will prevent this population from being unsuccessful and ill-prepared for life after high school. Internal resources can help adolescents of color develop the will to survive and become productive members of society. Similarly, due to the lax nature of community colleges, MOC community college students' enrollment may be more flexible than that of 4-year colleges and universities (Mason, 1998).

### **Academically Underprepared**

It has been found that MOC's academic preparation positively effects their academic ability and outcomes, mainly in mathematics (Perrakis, 2008). Harris and Wood (2013) identified how negative depicted societal norms and messages (i.e., being lazy or disinterested) in education about African-American and Latino males can impact both students' and educators' assessments, thus minimizing student success in community college. It has been reported that over two-thirds of Black males who enroll in college will never obtain a degree (Land et al., 2014). Cliff Adelman, a senior associate with the Institute for Higher Education Policy (as cited in Engstrom & Tinto, 2008), stated, "No long-term solution to the problem of retaining and graduating underprepared low-income students is possible unless institutions find a way to address their academic needs" (p. 2). This statement still holds true with the rate of higher education degree attainment for MOCs not paralleling enrollment rates; thus, additionally aiding the low transfer and

elevated attrition rates for Latino students is the large number of Latinos/as who enter into higher education unprepared for collegiate level work (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Wilson (2014) found that students from higher SES, of traditional college age, and who are White or Asian American are more likely than African-American and Latino males to obtain a college degree. Furthermore, Wilson went on to find that students with more rigorous high school preparation, higher achievement test scores, and higher secondary grade point averages (GPAs) are more likely to transfer to 4-year institutions. Berry (as cited in Land et al., 2014) found that Black male students are often misrepresented and viewed as underachievers, subsequently leading them to be placed in low ability groups. This issue leads this population to be overlooked for Gifted and Talented (G/T) testing and skill-appropriate math classes, while others are deemed and classified as special education students. Harper and Griffin (2011) viewed SES inequalities as one of the factors leading to a lack of African-American students being academically prepared. The persistence of residential apartheid in the United States concentrates students of color, primarily African-Americans and Latinos, in public schools that have fewer resources, inadequate per-student expenditure allotments, fewer, if any, advanced placement (AP) and college preparatory courses, and inexperienced teachers compared to the suburban schools many White students are able to attend.

### **Low-Income**

Without a doubt, restricted financial resources, inadequate academic preparation, and feelings of cultural alienation are some of the hindering factors for minority community college transfer and degree completion (Wilson, 2014). Much of the educational research on Latino students describes challenges for this group's ability to successfully

navigate through postsecondary transitions due to low SES, low parental educational levels, and lack of access to resources about college (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). These same factors are applicable to the African-American college-going population, along with many single-parent homes.

### **Parental Influence**

Recently, researchers have only begun to focus their efforts on understanding the influence of minority families on students' educational persistence patterns and academic achievement (Palmer et al., 2011). Mason (1998) found that the more support students received from external sources outside the college setting from a significant female—mother, girlfriend, or wife—the more likely the student was to persist. Furthermore, in a study conducted by J. L. Moore (as cited in Palmer et al., 2011), both Black and White students were shown to rely heavily on their families for direction, inspiration, and assurance to facilitate and cultivate postsecondary achievement.

Research shows that African-American students and their communities are facing an epidemic known as *fatherlessness* (Land et al., 2014). Land et al. (2014) went on to describe how Black male students are being raised by families in isolated, economically disadvantaged urban communities, proposing that this population requires additional support and deserves greater concern than other groups of students. It has been shown that mothers raise both male and female minority students in single-parent homes in the absence of a male figure or biological fathers and parenting studies on offspring academic success is largely focused on mothers, however minority males are still underperforming in the postsecondary sector of education (Kim & Hill, 2015). A study conducted by Toldson (2008) included two national surveys in a fatherlessness comparison amongst ethnic

groups. African-Americans were the ethnic group with the highest amount of fatherless homes, estimated at 56-60%, compared to White students totaling 20-25% fatherless homes.

Parental involvement and influence were shown to have a great impact on African-American college aspirations (Toldson, Braithwaite, & Rentie, 2009). Palmer et al. (2011) also found that parental support greatly enhanced students' confidence, efficacy, and motivation. Kim and Hill's (2015) findings concluded that both mothers and fathers have comparable impacts on their children's academic success. Therefore, Palmer et al. asserted that African-American students with strong parental and family support are more likely to be successful in college, specifically at a 4-year PWI university.

### **Mentoring Programs**

According to a 2010 report published by the National Mentoring Partnership (as cited in Gibson, 2014), the average cost for a mentoring program is \$1,500 per student per year. Several initiatives, such as Compton Community College's (CCC) mentoring program, have contributed to the academic success and retention rates of African-American male college students, specifically at 2-year community colleges (Gibson, 2014; Minority Male Community College Collaborative [M2C3], n.d.); however, there is still no multi-institutional agenda that focuses on the disparity between degree attainment and enrollment for MOC college students. A handful of mentoring programs exist that cater to the Latino population, preparing college-going students for college level curriculum. Puente Program at the University of California, established in 1981 was first established at Chabot College in Hayward, California. The Puente Program is now in 55 2-year colleges and 36 high schools in California, providing intensive writing instruction, Latino literature studies,

academic counseling and mentoring, and workshops that integrate family members. Summer Scholars Transfer Institute (SSTI) is a joint project involving Santa Ana College, the Los Angeles Community College District, and the University of California at Irvine (UCI) serving 150 community college students each summer. Through this program alone, Santa Ana College has drastically improved its ranking from 44th to ninth place in the number of Latino students transferring to the University of California (Martinez & Fernandez, 2004). These initiatives have not only sought to accomplish state level goals of retention, but also served as a clearinghouse for federal and state collaborative efforts to conduct and propagate findings from empirical research on the lived experiences of minority male community college students (M2C3, n.d.).

Bragg and Durham (2012) found that out of all ethnic groups, only two in 10 students pursuing a full-time community college education for an associate's degree received one within 3 years. Mentoring programs can also increase the likelihood that African-American and Latino male students will transfer to a 4-year college. Statistics such as these have led humanitarian organizations such as the Lumina Foundation for Education and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to push for radical change and improvement of college completion nationally for all students, specifically minority students. Gibson (2014) found that, prior to postsecondary education, African-American males in mentoring programs are more likely to exhibit higher self-esteem, higher levels of academic motivation, and better performance. In Gibson's study on the impact of mentoring programs for African-American male community college students, the results showed that participants in a mentoring program respond better to structured programs that provide support, guidance, and academic assistance, which will enable them to be successful

academically. In other words, Gibson found that, as a result of participating in a mentoring program, students' relationships with faculty members would improve and GPAs would increase. In addition, African-American male students would develop social skills, seek leadership opportunities, and become more civic-minded.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter provided a review of the literature related to the present study. There is limited research on the motivational factors that lead to postsecondary degree attainment and transfer rates to 4-year universities/colleges of African-American and Latino males within the community college sector. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology further detailing the sample group, data collection methods, and data analysis methodology.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter outlined the methodology that was employed in this study. This quantitative, correlational research study sought to investigate which of the seven motivational factors—(a) career/personal, (b) humanitarian, (c) prove worth, (d) default, (e) expectation, (f) encouragement, and (g) help family—if any, contribute to African-American and Latino male community college completion at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer to 4-year universities. Further included in this chapter is a thorough description of the SMAU survey (Phinney et al., 2006) that was utilized to measure ethnicity as the primary variable that may influence what motivates male African-American and Latino community college students to enroll in, persist in, and complete a community college program.

Most research on African-American and Latino male community college students is qualitative, lending a critical opportunity to conduct quantitative research on African-American and Latino male community college students' motivational levels as they pertain to higher education. Although the large body of research on MOC community college students is qualitative, educational motivational factors have been measured minimally utilizing SDT as the theoretical framework, thus creating a critical opportunity to conduct the present quantitative study on African-American and Latino male community college students' motivational levels with respect to higher education (Harper & Griffin, 2011; Mason, 1998; Sawyer & Palmer, 2014).

#### **Research Questions**

This study describes and analyzes a significant independent variable, race/ethnicity, and seven other dependent variables that may influence what motivates African-American



male and Latino male community college students in comparison to the general student population. The following research questions were formulated for this study:

1. What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for both African-American and Latino male community college students contributing to their enrollment in a 2-year community college?
2. Are any of the seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey (Phinney et al., 2006) related to their race/ethnicity?

### **Overview of Chapter Content**

This chapter will further outline the research design and methodology for the present study and also identify the study sample, the instrumentation, and data collection procedures, and describe how the data was analyzed. The researcher included general questions asked of the study's target population (both, male African-American and Latino community college students) to determine fit and appropriateness to be included in the study and a description of how the measurement tool, SMAU (Phinney et al., 2006) was administered is described. The SMAU survey asks questions that focus on student motivational factors for pursuing a college degree or certificate. The 33-item measurement tool consists of motivation and persistence variables and factors that may or may not contribute to individual student success of achieving a 2-year college degree or certificate, which may also relate to the studies subjects' transfer goals.

### **Research Methodology and Rationale**

This study employed a quantitative, correlational design using a survey to investigate what seven motivational factors—(a) career/personal, (b) humanitarian, (c)

prove worth, (d) default, (e) expectation, (f) encouragement, and (g) help family—if any, contribute to African-American male and Latino male educational community college completion/graduation rates at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer rates to 4-year universities. The study measured motivational levels, comparing one ethnicity to the other. The purpose of using a quantitative design for this study was to generalize from a sample of a population and make inferences about the characteristics and attitudes to the general target population (Creswell, 2014). The present study focused on community college student persistence and the relationship between motivation and academic achievement for MOC (i.e., African-American and Latino) community college students. As evidenced in the literature and categorized in the SMAU survey, motivation, social and academic integration, being academically underprepared, low-income, being an at-risk student, parental influence and mentoring programs may or may not increase student success and postsecondary degree attainment for both male African-American and Latino college students.

### **Validity/Trustworthiness of Study Design**

The researcher identified only one substantial threat to this study's validity: selection of participants. Participants were based on their gender, ethnicity, and community college academic standing (i.e., enrolled). Participants included in this study may have had specific demographics (i.e., at-risk or unemployed) that may predispose them to certain outcomes not controlled for in this study (Creswell, 2014), such as premature disconnectedness from the college environment for a host of reasons that may pertain to their financial or parental obligations. While this study did not use a control group (Caucasian or Asian American community college students), a comparison group

(i.e., Latino male community college students) and African-American male community college students was chosen at random with no preferential treatment related to their high school graduation status (i.e., diploma or GED, number of other immediate family members who completed community college, etc.) The researcher made face-to-face contact with all participants of the study enrolled and attending the community college located in the South Bay region of Southern California.

### **Setting**

Southern California is a large geographic region that is composed of many large urban and diverse counties. An example of a large urban area is Greater Los Angeles, which is a part of Los Angeles County and located within Southern California. The city of Torrance is located within Los Angeles County, which is where this study gained its data. Torrance is located in the South Bay region of Los Angeles County. The geographical area of the survey site is located in a suburban area surrounded by popular beach cities. The community college is located with direct access to restaurants, fast food chains, shopping malls, and strip malls.

The SMAU survey (Phinney et al., 2006) was administered to qualified adult male subjects (age 18 and over) that were students at a community college in Torrance, CA during the 2015-2016 academic school year. During the spring season, the city of Torrance maintains moderate climates, which breeds numerous outdoor activities for visitors, residents, and students of the community college located in the city Torrance, CA.

### **Population**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), Los Angeles County has an estimated 10,116,705 residents as of July 1, 2013, with African-Americans accounting for 9.2% and

Hispanics or Latinos making up 48.4% of the total population. Participants for this study included both African-American and Latino male community college students enrolled in the Spring 2016 academic year at a Southern California community college that reside in Los Angeles County. The sample group included a minimum of 100 male African-American and Latino male community college students located at a community college in Torrance, CA. The community college where the researcher gained data has a population of over 20,000 students, according to 2013 enrollment data<sup>1</sup>.

### **Sample**

The sample for this study consisted of 100 male African-American and Latino community college students. One community college in Torrance, CA was selected for this study within the ECCC District. The sample population was extracted from the student body of both African-American and Latino males at one community college in the ECCC District composed of 14% Black and 44% Hispanic community college students<sup>2</sup>.

### **Sampling Procedures**

Through non-probability sampling, the target population was requested to complete the paper and pencil survey in a non-controlled setting administered by the researcher adjacent to the college campus near a designated shopping center/strip mall. The location where the researcher was distributing and collecting surveys to the target population was on the corner of a strip mall. The researcher for this study was present near the community college campus at the designated strip mall between the hours of 12-4PM every Wednesday and Friday until the minimum sample of the population was surveyed. The

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<sup>1</sup> This information comes from a source that would reveal the name of the participating institution and break confidentiality. Therefore, the source is not included.

<sup>2</sup> This information comes from a source that would reveal the name of the participating institution and break confidentiality. Therefore, the source is not included.

researcher made available a detailed letter describing the research study to each participant as well as participant invitations (see Appendix A), an information/fact sheet (see Appendix B), a survey (see Appendix C), and a self-addressed envelope, if participants chose to complete the survey offsite. The survey took approximately 3 minutes to complete. Participants were requested to read an information/fact sheet outlining their rights as a participant and were also asked to complete the survey including three questions prior to completing the 33-items on the SMAU survey. The three, yes or no, questions that were asked of all willing and qualified participants were:

1. Are you 18 years or older?
2. Are you a male African-American or male Latino?
3. Are you currently enrolled in the community college?

### **Human Subjects Considerations**

The researcher applied to the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to collect data on human subjects during the spring 2016 term. The researcher sent a full research proposal to the Pepperdine University IRB in order to secure permission to survey adult, human subjects. The intent of the present study was to gather data from adult MOC (African-American and Latino) attending a public community college located in Southern California that would lend insight to motivational factors for this population to enroll, attend, and persist in college. There was no physical or psychological risk to subjects involved in this study. Anonymity was provided due to the nature (non-invasive) and method (survey) of data collection, and there were no personally identifying questions asked of participants that could link participants to individual surveys. Target participants were identified physically at the survey designation by the researcher and were physically

approached by the researcher to request individual participation in the study. The researcher consistently utilized the verbal script located in Appendix D. Upon agreeing to be a participant in the study, subjects were informed that they had an option to complete the survey and hand it back to the researcher during the designated days and times of distribution or were given the option to complete the survey at their own discretion and mail it into the researcher to the researcher's P.O. Box address. Stamped envelopes with the researcher's P.O. Box address were made available; however, all participants completed the SMAU survey at the time of distribution.

Once approval was granted to move forward to collect data from the target population, the researcher then formulated an information/fact sheet, which was made available and administered to participants of the study. All forms were printed (i.e., information/fact sheet, participant invitations, and surveys), and other necessary items were gathered (i.e., pencils, clipboards, envelopes, and stamps). A 9x12 clipboard with storage unit was purchased for the completed surveys to be submitted into. The information/fact sheet contained age appropriate and common sense information that described (a) the nature of the study, and (b) an explanation of the candidates' option to participate or not. Also, participation or non-participation in this study neither negatively nor positively affected students' academic standing at the community college. The researcher explained that the study was being conducted as part of a dissertation for a doctoral program at a non-affiliated university outside of the ECCC District. The demographic questions included direct and general questions that confirmed the self-reported demographics were valid (i.e., gender, ethnicity, and postsecondary status).

Risks to participants were avoided and minimized by not collecting or requesting any self-disclosing participant information, such as name, address, phone number, email address, etc. The researcher also used a pseudonym for the community college and the physical location of the college was not completely identified, so further association of the subjects' participation in the study is controlled for. Age was also not controlled for in this study. However, participants needed to validate that they were at least 18 years of age or older by answering the age identifying question at the beginning of the SMAU survey. The researcher also was prepared to request to review participants' community college student identification cards to further validate enrollment status at the community college; however, the researcher did not have to ask to view any of the participants' identification cards for the present study.

The researcher made it clear that involvement in the study was completely voluntary and at any point participants were able to withdraw or not complete the survey at their own discretion. Due to the high level of confidentiality maintained, the researcher did not have any information by which to contact the participants after surveys were submitted. If participants wished to withdraw their participation in the study, the researcher would not be able to locate an individual survey and discard of the survey due to each survey not including personally identifying information. Subjects of the present study were provided the information/fact sheet and participant invitation with the researcher's contact information if they had additional questions about the study and/or if they wanted to review the data statistics and findings of the present study.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality was upheld and confirmed for all participants by not collecting any personally identifying information, such as name, specific age, phone number, email address, or home address. The survey was made available to all willing and qualified participants adjacent to the community college site on the corner of a strip mall. The researcher was also available to answer questions at the times of distribution; every Wednesday and Friday between the hours of 12-4PM until the minimum of 100 surveys had been submitted. The researcher did not gather any of the participants' names, addresses, email addresses, or other personally identifying or contact information at any point during data collection. Information obtained from the surveys will be kept in a secure location known to the researcher for a maximum of 5 years as outlined in Pepperdine's IRB policies and procedures on saving and storing data.

## **Instrumentation**

An intact, adapted instrument was utilized for this study in order to draw meaningful inferences from scores obtained from the instrument (Creswell, 2014). Written permission to use the SMAU survey was not required for educational purposes as described by the authors on the first page of the survey (Appendix E), "Distribution must be controlled, meaning only to the participants engaged in the research or enrolled in the educational activity" (Phinney et al., 2006, p. 1).

The SMAU-Revised survey (Phinney et al., 2006) is a 33-item survey tool that was developed based on the original SMAU survey (Côté & Levine, 1997), which consisted of five subscales reflecting reasons for attending college. The five subscales originally developed by Côté and Levine (1997) are: career-materialism, personal-intellectual,



humanitarian, expectation-driven, and default. The purpose for revising the SMAU survey was to assess reasons why ethnic minority students attend universities (Phinney et al., 2006). In focus groups that included students from Asian, Latino, and African-American backgrounds, each group discussed their reasons for going to college, which were found to include three types of reasons that were not included in the original survey created by Côté and Levine.

The three new reasons developed by Phinney et al. (2006) were: helping family financially (i.e., "It would allow me to help family/parents financially"), attending college because of encouragement received (i.e., "Someone I admired or respected encouraged me), and proving oneself (i.e., "To prove wrong someone who expected me to fail"). Additionally, Phinney et al. added two items to the expectation-driven scale, which reflects thoughts expressed in the focus groups: not letting parents down and feeling one owed it to parents to do well. The revised SMAU measurement tool was pilot tested in 2005 with 450 college freshmen students. A factor analysis was completed, which resulted in a final total of 33 items distributed across seven scales; two separate subscales in the original study, Career/Materialism and Personal/Intellectual, became a single subscale. Phinney et al. reported that scale alpha reliabilities ranged from .70 to .88. The SMAU survey helped the researcher understand if the prevalent demographic factor, ethnicity, had a greater effect on African-American male than Latino male community college student postsecondary perceptions, educational motivation, degree attainment, and transfer rates from 2-year community colleges to 4-year universities.

Data were collected in the field in a non-controlled setting. Participants were asked to rate how much they agreed with each item on the SMAU survey as a reason for

attending college on a continuous scale, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly agree*. Quantitative measures were utilized. The items on the survey relate to the motivation and persistence variables that were described in the review of literature chapter: factors that largely impact MOC (African-American and Latino) community college student success (see Table 1).

**Career/personal.** Survey items 1, 3, 11, 15, 16, 21, 23, and 25 were used to measure career- and personal-oriented goals. Career choices and options are greatly minimized without a college degree (Gibson, 2014). Findings from these items provide insight on the importance of completing college for both African-American and Latino males based on career and autonomous-related goals.

Table 1

*Research Questions, Survey Questions, and Statistical Approach*

Research Questions	Survey Questions	Statistical Approach
1. What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for African-American male and Latino male community college students to enroll in a 2-year community college?	1, 3, 6, 11, 15, 16, 21, 23, 25, 28 (career/personal) 4, 9, 18, 19 (humanitarian) 2, 14, 20 (prove worth) 5, 10, 17, 22, 27, 31 (default) 12, 13, 24, 29, 33 (expectation) 8, 26, 30 (encouragement) 7, 32 (help family)	Repeated measures ANOVA with Bonferroni post hoc tests
2. Are any of the seven motivational factors related to their ethnicity?	1, 3, 6, 11, 15, 16, 21, 23, 25, 28 (career/personal) 4, 9, 18, 19 (humanitarian) 2, 14, 20 (prove worth) 5, 10, 17, 22, 27, 31 (default) 12, 13, 24, 29, 33 (expectation) 8, 26, 30 (encouragement) 7, 32 (help family)	Pearson correlations

**Default.** Survey items 5, 10, 17, 22, 27, and 31 were used to measure motivational factors based on personal lack of choice or the ability to reason with oneself in making the

decision to attend college. Autonomy can be measured through these questions based on personal volition and locus of control. Park et al. (2011) found that students exhibit more autonomy in learning environments where they share responsibility in decision-making regarding the conditions of their learning, as well as when their learning efforts are free from external controls. Opportunities for choice are highly suggested in learning environments for students, as they promote autonomy and competence (Park et al., 2011; Ryan, 1995).

**Encouragement.** Survey items 8, 26, and 30 were used to measure how much external support students received from friends, family, and college personnel. Palmer et al. (2011) found that Black students are more likely to be successful at PWIs when they receive guidance, encouragement, and assurance from their families. Encouragement was also noted by Mason (1998) to have a significant outcome on persistence in African-American college students. When encouragement was actively provided by those outside of the college environment, (i.e., significant others or alumni), the research showed a higher chance that students would persist and complete community college.

**Expectation.** Survey items 12, 13, 24, 29, and 33 were used to measure student outlooks regarding their postsecondary education. The questions in the SMAU seek to understand students' expectations of themselves and perceived expectations others have for them. In a study conducted by Sáenz and Ponjuan in 2011, Vasquez Urias and Wood (2015) found that Latino males have a difficult time assimilating to the community college culture due to existing peer and cultural expectations about identity and gender roles for this ethnic group. In a study conducted by Spady (1971, as cited in Mason, 1998), it was believed that the positive interaction of students' expectations, previous background, and

ability matched with the positive influences of college increase the likelihood of social interactions, thus increasing rates of persistence.

**Help family.** Survey items 7 and 32 were used to measure how students perceived their obligations to attend college to aid their family in acquiring a better life. Harris and Wood (2013) found that when MOC work off campus and have family responsibilities, these factors contribute to negative student engagement and low student achievement. While helping family may be the driving force for enrolling in college, it could also be a deterring force, contributing to the growing low levels of persistence for MOC in community colleges. For Latino/a students, Sáenz and Ponjuan (2011) found that this ethnic group is more likely to persist in college due to familial and community support as well as extended social networks.

Deil-Amen (2011) found that African-American students are more likely to express a higher interest in wanting to have a connection, whether cultural or personal, with another individual or group on the college campus. However, other ethnic groups expressed their lack of time to engage with others on campus due to other obligations, including helping out their families (Deil-Amen, 2011). It is noteworthy to mention that this variable further rejects Tinto's (1975) student integration theory as described in Palmer et al.'s (2011) study on the impact of family support on the success of Black men at an HBCU. The rejection of one domain (i.e., family) for another (i.e., community college) has not shown to be a positive or significant cause for MOC student persistence and graduation rates.

**Humanitarian.** Survey items 4, 9, 18, and 19 were used to measure the subjects' outlook altruistically. Minority community college students, particularly African-American

students, have a greater outlook or higher expectations on their classroom engagement compared to their White peers; however, these self-perceptions expressed by African-American students are not congruent with the views of their engagement experienced by their teachers according to Shernoff and Schmidt (as cited in Park et al., 2011).

**Prove worth.** Survey items 2, 14, and 20 were used to measure the subjects' outlook on public and outside perceptions of themselves (see Table 2). Young boys of color have been reported to be overrepresented in disability categories (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Potentially being misplaced and segregated from the general population, MOC have to break through the barriers of being mislabeled as having intellectual disabilities and enter into the postsecondary education underprepared, yet wanting to prove others wrong who believed they could not attain a college degree.

Table 2

*Content Validity*

Motivational Factors	Citations
Career/personal	Côté & Levine (1997); Phinney et al. (2006)
Default	Côté & Levine (1997)
Encouragement	Phinney et al. (2006)
Expectation	Côté & Levine (1997); Phinney et al. (2006)
Help family	Phinney et al. (2006)
Humanitarian	Côté & Levine (1997)
Prove worth	Phinney et al. (2006)

**Validity**

No validity of the revised SMAU survey has been indicated (Phinney et al., 2006) due to not identifying any studies who have utilized this measurement tool. However, this lack of validity information does not pose a threat to validity in experimental research, because the participants in this study are enrolled in the community college chosen for this present

study, thus providing that there is some correlation with enrolled MOC community college students and motivational factors (Creswell, 2014). Nine recurring themes persisted throughout the literature on MOC community college students that correlated with the measured variables for which the SMAU measurement tool tests.; these nine variables are; motivation, social integration, academic integration, persistence, at-risk, academically underprepared, low-income, parental influence, and mentoring programs. SDT is grounded on human behavior and motivation, which was the underlying focus of the present study. Based on the research, motivation in educational studies can either be intrinsically or extrinsically expressed. Intrinsic motivation is centered on autonomy versus control (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Extrinsic motivation is behavior that is expressed by receiving contingencies, reinforcement or punishment based on external factors (Ryan et al., 2009).

### **Reliability**

The measurement procedure for this study consists of two constant variables; race/ethnicity (African-American or Latino) and gender, male. Internal consistency for SMAU survey ranges from .70 to .88 based on scale alpha reliabilities (Phinney et al., 2006).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Minimal materials were required for the present study. The materials needed for this research study included clipboards (one master clipboard with a storage unit with locked compartment) and two other standard, wooden clipboards, pencils, envelopes, stamps, information/fact sheets, SMAU surveys with demographic questions, and participant invitations. The documents and pencils were handed out to eligible and qualified participants in front of the data collection site at the strip mall.

The sample for this research study included both African-American and Latino males enrolled community college students at a community college located in the South Bay region of Southern California. Women were excluded from this study due to their statistically high and increasing graduation and transfer rates from college. Other MOC (i.e., Asian Americans) and males who do not identify with being African-American or Latino (i.e., White males) were also excluded from this study. Excluded individuals were not at risk of discomfort due to the survey site being off campus and due to the non-compensatory nature of the study. The survey site was non-threatening and non-intimidating, with the researcher handing out documents to eligible and qualified participants only.

The sample for this study was chosen using a non-probability sampling method. Subjects self-elected themselves to be part of the study, otherwise known as *voluntary sampling*. The study sought to gather a minimum of 100 surveys from enrolled adult African-American and Latino male community college students, but 101 surveys were collected in total. One survey was discarded due to more than 5 questions being unanswered. Coercion was mitigated in this study due to there being no compensation offered. Participants were told that they could opt out of the study at any time for any reason, thus limiting the risk of coercion. Participation in this research study was 100% voluntary. Subjects were informed that neither the researcher nor the research study were connected to the community college in any way, nor would any personally identifying information be collected from the participants. This knowledge decreased the possibility of subjects perceiving risks regarding their collegiate standing or course grades being at risk for any consequences, positive or negative.

The researcher was present on Wednesday and Friday of each week in March 2016 through the first week in April 2016 between the hours of 12-4PM on the corner of the same shopping center located adjacent to the community college campus at the strip mall until the sample consisted of a total of 100 or more adult male African-American and Latino participants. The researcher provided verbal information to each participant via a researcher script (see Appendix D) regarding the background and purpose of the study. The researcher made available surveys and consent forms on clipboards in front of the designated research location. The researcher verbally instructed each participant to read the consent form, complete the SMAU survey, and hand back the completed survey to the researcher upon completion. Subjects also had the option to mail the completed SMAU survey to researcher's P.O. Box (provided on the stamped envelope available to all participants.)

The first document to be read was the consent form. The second and last document to be read and filled out was the 33-item SMAU survey with three non-personally identifying demographic questions. Upon completion of the SMAU survey, the researcher inserted the SMAU survey into the researcher's storage unit on the primary clipboard. At 4PM each Wednesday and Friday, the researcher collected all materials and departed from the research survey location. Upon reaching an undisclosed location after leaving the community college, the researcher counted the number of surveys completed that day and placed the documents back in the storage unit of the clipboard. The researcher recorded the number of surveys in a Microsoft Word document including the date and number of surveys collected until 100 completed surveys were collected. Subjects did not receive any compensation or incentives for participating in this study.



**Data management.** The data obtained from this study were kept in a locked storage unit of a clipboard that was only accessible to the researcher. The researcher performed data analysis upon completion of the data collection process. The researcher removed the surveys from the storage unit on the clipboard two times per week (Wednesday and Friday) to maintain an accounting of the progress toward the goal of obtaining a minimum of 100 completed surveys. On an undisclosed date, the researcher began data analysis and interpreted the results of the surveys. The surveys will be destroyed on the fifth year anniversary of the study's completion as required by the Pepperdine University IRB. Data and results from the surveys were stored on the researcher's password-protected computer to be analyzed. This data remains in an Excel spreadsheet and will be destroyed on the fifth year of the study's completion as well.

**Data analysis.** The collection of data took place in the Spring 2016 semester/term at a community college located in the South Bay region of Southern California. Data analysis focused on examining the seven variables on the SMAU survey —(a) career/personal, (b) humanitarian, (c) prove worth, (d) default, (e) expectation, (f) encouragement, and (g) help family—that may or may not contribute to the persistence and motivational factors related to attaining a postsecondary degree/certificate for African-American male and Latino male community college students. The responses from the SMAU survey determined the factors that motivate African-American male and Latino male community college students to attain a college degree/certificate and/or transfer to a 4-year university/college in comparison to the ethnicity demographic variable. The following steps outlined how the data for the present study were analyzed:

- Step 1: The researcher created a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet including the number of participants of the sample who returned the survey, the three demographic questions, and 33 items from the SMAU survey to input the data.
- Step 2: The researcher reviewed the surveys for response bias by reviewing each survey for unrealistic patterned responses (i.e., a survey with all 5 or *strongly agree* responses). The researcher discarded surveys that had more than three nonresponses or questions left unanswered (Creswell, 2014).
- Step 3: The researcher provided a descriptive analysis of data for all independent and dependent variables in the study (Creswell, 2014). Variables were measured on a regression scale based on ethnicity, gender, educational motivation, and perception using the stratified random sampling method. Data was input into R Studio, software for data analysis, by the researcher. Motivation as the leading variable requires knowledge of factors that may or may not lead to academic success for the target population. The primary factors were distinguished after an analysis of the data. The survey sought to uncover what factors contribute to academic success, persistence, and motivation for the target population.

### **Positionality**

The researcher comes from a family of primarily African-American and multi-racial males. Having two brothers, both of whom have enrolled in a 2-year community college and a 4-year PWI directly after high school and did not obtain a degree, spurred the researcher's interest in the present study. The researcher also has two male school-aged children that are of African-American descent, and she would like to understand better how to prepare them for postsecondary success.

The researcher's father has obtained a postsecondary certificate/degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree. With such close ties to the study's target population, the researcher would like to develop a mentoring program for young boys of color and MOC, more specifically targeting identified low SES, disadvantaged, and at-risk students. The researcher hopes to bridge community resources and professionals to young MOC attending inner city public schools to prepare African-American male and Latino students for postsecondary success.

Through an extensive literature review, the researcher found that mentoring programs have been shown to be effective for MOC community college students, enabling them to persist through their programs and attain postsecondary degrees. As a female African-American parent and student, the researcher understands the importance of higher education as it pertains to navigating through a diverse society, career choice, and financial stability.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was, for a sample of African-American and Latino male community college students in Southern California, to assess their levels of motivation as it pertains to their community college academic pursuits. The final sample consisted of 100 African-American and Latino male community college students. One survey was discarded and not included in the final data analysis due to more than three questions left blank with no response.

Table 3 displays the frequency counts for the primary variable: race/ethnicity. The men in this study were either African-American or Latino and all participants were enrolled in the community college and were at least 18 years or older. Forty-three (43%) of the men were African-American and 57 (57%) were Latino (Table 3).

Table 3

### *Frequency Counts for Selected Variables*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Race	African-American	43	43.0
	Latino	57	57.0

*Note.*  $N = 100$ .

Table 4 displays the ratings for the motivational items sorted by highest mean. These ratings were based on a 5-point metric; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The items with the highest agreement were item 11, to achieve personal success ( $M = 4.64$ ), and item 21, to help earn more money ( $M = 4.48$ ). The items with the least agreement were item 10, I don't get anything out of my courses ( $M = 2.22$ ), and item 17, there were pressures on me from my friends ( $M = 2.60$ ).

Table 4

*Ratings of Motivational Factor Items Sorted by Highest Mean*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
11. To achieve personal success.	4.64	0.80
21. To help earn more money.	4.48	1.00
32. It would allow me to help parents/family financially.	4.32	1.13
3. To get into an interesting and satisfying career.	4.25	1.12
7. To get an education in order to help my parents/family financially.	4.25	1.02
16. To obtain the "finer things in life"	4.24	1.00
25. To achieve a position of higher status in society.	4.20	1.07
26. There was someone who believed I could succeed.	4.16	1.19
15. To develop myself personally.	4.16	1.13
24. I owe it to my parents/family to do well in college.	4.04	1.25
12. I am expected to get a degree.	3.98	1.33
23. To improve my intellectual capacity.	3.97	1.20
20. To prove to others that I can success in college.	3.96	1.33
2. To prove wrong those who thought I was not "college material."	3.89	1.36
30. Someone I admired or respected encouraged me.	3.83	1.36
5. It is better than the alternatives.	3.78	1.16
8. I was encouraged by a mentor or role model.	3.77	1.31
14. To prove wrong those who expected me to fail.	3.70	1.44
1. It gives me the opportunity to study and learn.	3.64	1.44
33. Would let parents/family down if I didn't succeed.	3.52	1.45
4. To help people who are less fortunate.	3.42	1.39
28. To understand complexities of the modern world.	3.38	1.42
9. To contribute to the welfare of others.	3.32	1.35
18. To contribute to the improvement of the human condition.	3.26	1.44
22. There are few other options.	3.22	1.26
19. To make meaningful changes to the "system."	3.21	1.48
13. Parents/family would be very disappointed.	3.07	1.48
29. There were pressures on me from parents/family.	3.01	1.47
6. To understand the complexities of life.	2.91	1.37
27. I often ask myself why I'm in university	2.89	1.51
31. Had no choice but to come to college.	2.68	1.52
17. There were pressures on me from my friends.	2.59	1.31
10. I don't get anything out of my courses.	2.22	1.33

*Note.* *N* = 100. Ratings based on a 5-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

## Reliability

Table 5 displays the psychometric characteristics for the seven scale scores. These ratings were based on the 5-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranged in size from  $\alpha = .57$  to  $\alpha = .82$  with the median sized coefficient being  $\alpha = .71$ . Two of the scales (default and expectation) had alpha coefficients below the general standard of  $\alpha \geq .70$  (Phinney et al., 2006).

Table 5

### *Psychometric Characteristics for Summated Scale Scores*

Score	Number of Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Low	High	Alpha
Career Personal	10	3.99	0.71	1.50	5.00	.81
Humanitarian	4	3.30	1.14	1.00	5.00	.82
Prove Worth	3	3.85	1.15	1.00	5.00	.78
Default	6	2.64	0.77	1.00	4.67	.57
Expectation	5	3.52	0.94	1.40	5.00	.69
Encouragement	3	3.92	1.03	1.00	5.00	.71
Help Family	2	4.29	0.94	1.00	5.00	.70

*Note.*  $N = 100$ . Ratings based on a 5-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

## Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked, What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for both African-American and Latino male community college students contributing to their enrollment in a 2-year community college? This question was answered using repeated measures ANOVA with Bonferroni post hoc tests (Table 6).

Table 6 displays the results of the repeated measures ANOVA test comparing the seven motivational factors to each other. Bonferroni post hoc tests were then used to determine which specific means were significantly different from each other at the  $p < .05$  level. The overall model was significant ( $p = .001$ ). Inspection of the table found the *help*

*family* factor score ( $M = 4.29$ ) to be significantly higher than any of the other six motivational factors. The next three factor scores (career/personal, encouragement, and prove worth) were not significantly different from each other but all three were significantly higher than the lowest three factor scores (expectation, humanitarian, and default). In addition, expectation and humanitarian were not significantly different from each other but both were significantly higher than the default score ( $M = 2.64$ ).

Table 6

*Repeated Measures ANOVA Test with Bonferroni Post Hoc Tests for the Motivational Factor Scores Sorted by the Highest Mean*

Rank	Motivational Factor	$M$	$SD$
1	Help Family	4.29	0.94
2	Career / Personal	3.99	0.71
3	Encouragement	3.92	1.03
4	Prove Worth	3.85	1.15
5	Expectation	3.52	0.94
6	Humanitarian	3.30	1.14
7	Default	2.64	0.77

*Note.*  $N = 100$ . Full ANOVA model:  $F(6, 594) = 45.61, p = .001$ . Bonferroni post hoc test results comparing individual factor scores: all factors above a line are significant larger than any of the factors below a line. Specifically, 1 > 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 ( $p < .05$ ); 2, 3, and 4 > 5, 6 and 7 ( $p < .05$ ); 5 and 6 > 7 ( $p < .05$ ); all other mean differences were not significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

## Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, Are any of the seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey related to their ethnicity? Pearson's Correlation was used to compare the seven factors with the student's race (African-American versus Latino). Inspection of the table found none of the seven Pearson correlations to be significant (Table 7).

Table 7

*Pearson Correlations for Motivational Factors with Student Race*

Factor	Race <sup>a</sup>
Career/Personal	.03
Humanitarian	-.01
Prove Worth	.03
Default	-.09
Expectation	-.02
Encouragement	.04
Help Family	.10

Note.  $N = 100$ . \*  $p < .05$ . <sup>a</sup> Coding: 0 = African-American 1 = Latino.

**Other Findings of Interest**

As an additional set of analyses, Spearman correlations were used to compare each of the 33 items with the students' race (African-American versus Latino). Inspection of the table found only one of the 33 correlations to be significant. Specifically, male African-American students had more agreement with item 31 (had no choice but to come to college) than male Latino community college students,  $r_s = -.22$ ,  $p = .03$  (Table 8).

Table 8

*Spearman Rank-Ordered Correlations for Individual Motivational Items with Student Race*

Statement	Race <sup>a</sup>
1. It gives me the opportunity to study and learn.	.14
2. To prove wrong those who thought I was not "college material."	-.03
3. To get into an interesting and satisfying career.	-.07
4. To help people who are less fortunate.	.03
5. It is better than the alternatives.	.17
6. To understand the complexities of life.	.06
7. To get an education in order to help my parents/family financially.	.04
8. I was encouraged by a mentor or role model.	.05
(continued)	
9. To contribute to the welfare of others.	.11
10. I don't get anything out of my courses.	-.04
11. To achieve personal success.	.17
12. I am expected to get a degree.	.04



Statement	Race <sup>a</sup>
13. Parents/family would be very disappointed.	-.03
14. To prove wrong those who expected me to fail.	.07
15. To develop myself personally.	.08
16. To obtain the “finer things in life.”	-.08
17. There were pressures on me from my friends.	.06
18. To contribute to the improvement of the human condition.	-.10
19. To make meaningful changes to the “system.”	-.04
20. To prove to others that I can succeed in college.	-.02
21. To help earn more money.	-.02
22. There are few other options.	-.06
23. To improve my intellectual capacity.	-.02
24. I owe it to my parents/family to do well in college.	.15
25. To achieve a position of higher status in society.	-.10
26. There was someone who believed I could succeed.	.05
27. I often ask myself why I’m in university.	.12
28. To understand complexities of the modern world.	-.05
29. There were pressures on me from parents/family.	-.11
30. Someone I admired or respected encouraged me.	-.07
31. Had no choice but to come to college.	-.22
32. It would allow me to help parents/family financially.	.03
33. Would let parents/family down if I didn’t succeed.	-.11

Note.  $N = 100$ . \*  $p < .05$ . <sup>a</sup> Coding: 0 = African-American 1 = Latino.

### Summary of the Findings

**General observations.** Based on the responses of the 100 African-American and Latino male community college students, the overall motivational factors are similar between both groups of men represented in this study. However, to help one’s family was rated significantly higher than any of the other six factors by a majority of the participants surveyed. The finding, to help one’s family, was not expected to be the most significant, as the SDT posits that students achieve academic success when they are fully integrated; when autonomy is fulfilled, when students feel competent and related to others in their academic domain. Career/personal, which was the second most significant motivational factor for MOC at the community college in Southern California, aligns more with the adopted theoretical framework for this study; SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 1995). To

help one's family as a category being rated the most significant of all seven motivational factors was interesting because, question eleven, part of the career/personal category, asked: on the 5-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. "to achieve success" was the most significant question among MOC in this study based on the statistical findings when rating the motivational factors by highest mean.

**Research question 1.** Research question one asked, What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for both African-American and Latino male community college students contributing to their enrollment in a 2-year community college? For this research question, male African-American and Latino community college students reported feeling strongly motivated by being able to help their families. Also, the men surveyed in this study shared the same motivational level as it pertained to the default questions (5, 10, 17, 22, 27, and 31; see Appendix E). These questions measured participants' motivational factors based on personal choice and autonomy. These particular questions also focused on the importance of students feeling that they share the responsibility in the decision-making regarding the conditions of their learning. There was minimal motivation for male African-American and Latino community college students regarding having a shared responsibility in the decision-making process as it pertains to their learning and learning environment.

This finding provides some insight into why MOC might not be persisting and obtaining postsecondary certificates and degrees at equal rates as their female and male counterparts, due to not having an interest in their educational outcomes. As evidenced in the SDT, students achieve academic success when the three basic needs are met; autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). If there is no interest in the learning or learning environment, students could manifest feelings of ineffectiveness which goes

against the SDT stating students desire to be competent and autonomous. This finding also rejects the null hypotheses: At least one of the seven motivational factors for Latino male community college students will be significantly stronger than at least one of the other seven factors for African-American male community college students. Both African-American and Latino males felt significantly strongly about one motivational factor, to help one's family.

**Research question 2.** Research question two asked, Are any of the seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey related to their ethnicity? As evidenced by the results (Table 7), there was no significance among the seven motivational factors amongst the two racial/ethnic groups, African-American and Latinos, surveyed. This finding was not surprising, due to the similar statistics pertaining to African-American and Latino male persistence and degree attainment rates. Harper and Griffin (2011) found that Latino males are graduating at 53.2% from community colleges in 3 years and Wood and Palmer (2013) found that African-American males are graduating at 42.2% within that same time frame.

The null hypotheses for research question two was accepted, because none of the seven motivational factors were related to race. There was no significant difference amongst the two race/ethnic groups that was significantly higher than any of the factors taking into account race/ethnicity.

**Other findings of interest.** The results of comparing the two racial/ethnic groups against one another resulted in one significant factor; African-American males scored significantly higher than male Latino community college students on one question that asked each participant to rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5

being *strongly agree*, “Had no choice but to come to college.” This finding is interesting, because unlike the literature that shows that Latino males have the highest enrollment rates compared to other male race/ethnic groups, which subsequently results in a large number of this population ending up in jail or prison, 2.7 to one according to Sáenz & Ponjuan (2009), African American males that graduate from high school and defer to community college as their alternative. This finding does not make exact inferences and additional information is required to understand exactly what is meant as it pertains to personal intent and motivation behind lacking alternatives.

In summary, this study used data from 100 students to examine a sample of African-American and Latino male community college students, to assess their levels of motivation as it pertains to their community college academic pursuits. A total of 101 men participated in this study, however the final sample consisted of 100 African-American and Latino male, enrolled community college students. Research question 1 (differences in motivation) found helping family to be the highest motivational factor and default to be the lowest factor (Table 6). Research question 2 (motivational factors with race) found no factor to be related to the student’s race (Table 7).

In the final chapter, these findings from chapter four will be compared to the literature. Conclusions and implications will be drawn, and a series of recommendations will be suggested for future studies. .

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

In the final chapter of this dissertation, the researcher restates the problem, purpose, and research questions, and discuss the overview of the research design. Second, the researcher presented conclusions and a discussion of the study findings in comparison to the literature was reviewed. Third, the researcher presented strengths, weaknesses, and recommended methodological enhancements, followed by policy and practitioner recommendations. Lastly, this final chapter concludes with limitations and reflections.

### **Problem**

The disproportion of degree attainment amongst racial/ethnic groups and gender is shown annually in the national college graduation rates for minorities. Black men are graduating at 33.1% compared with 44.8% for Black women, according to the U.S. Department of Education in 2012 (Valbrun, 2015). Similarly, in 2007, it was found that the ratio of Latino males incarcerated to those in college dormitories was 2.7 to one, with an estimated 63.1% of this demographic being between the ages of 18 to 24 (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009), which is the standard age range for initial entry into postsecondary education. Each year, 54.9% of African-American males enter into 2-year community colleges (Wood & Williams, 2013), which presents a remarkable disparity in the success of African-American male college degree attainment Valbrun (2015) reports to be at 33.1%. Like African-American males, Latino males face a similar issue with respect to disproportionate rates compared to their female peers regarding both college access and degree attainment (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). However, in comparison to African-American college-aged males, 18-24, there is limited literature available surrounding college going Latino males due to

the literature showing this population showing more of a presence in jails than on the campuses of colleges.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational research study was to investigate which of the seven motivational factors measured in the SMAU survey developed by Phinney et al. (2006)—career/personal, humanitarian, prove worth, default, expectation, encouragement, and help family—if any, contribute to African-American male and Latino male community college completion/graduation at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer to 4-year universities. Quantitative research investigates social phenomena or human problems by employing a method using variables that can be measured numerically then analyzed to determine if the proposed theory explicates or predicts the phenomenon of interest (Yilmaz, 2013).

## **Design Overview**

The design method utilized for this study was to quantitatively measure motivational factors in MOC, more specifically, male African-American and Latino community college students over the age of 18. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered utilizing repeated measures ANOVA with Bonferroni post hoc tests and Pearson correlations. Using non-probability sampling, the target population was requested to complete an intact survey, SMAU survey (Phinney et al., 2006), in a non-controlled setting. Data were collected near the community college at the strip mall.

## **Brief Summary**

The goal of this study was to find out what are the most prominent reasons African-American and Latino males of color enroll in community college. After an extensive

literature review, the researcher wondered why such a large percentage of African-American and Latino males enrolled in community college, yet both groups were the least likely, based on ethnicity and gender, to complete the 2-year program and/or transfer to a 4-year university. This study found that both groups were similarly motivated to enroll in community college to help their family and were least motivated by autonomous factors that pertain to their learning and learning environment.

### **Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

Both African-American and Latino males were directly motivated by helping their families. However, this motivation cannot be linked and inferred to concluding that the participants were encouraged by their families to enroll and persist in community college, but rather it can be implied that to help one's family translates to bettering the quality of life for their families. In regard to the theoretical framework adopted for the present study, Wood et al. (2014) described motivation as a force that causes an individual to do something and differentiated the term motivation from what he described as educational motivation. The primary difference for students in the postsecondary sector regarding motivation is the influence from outside or external sources, such as parents. Educational motivation for students in the postsecondary sector are influenced by internal campus sources, such as professors and administrators. Wood et al. described a host of reasons students can be motivated, such as personal career goals, establishing a better future for oneself and family, being held accountable to others to succeed (i.e., making one's family proud), and being interested in one's academics, thus making SDT the foundation for and further accepting SDT as the theoretical framework for the present study.

SDT also indicates that when people are engaged in self-controlled or self-stimulating activities that are driven by a purpose, they are motivated by an inner need to feel autonomous, competent, and related (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Further, CET, the subtheory of SDT, states that for motivation to thrive in individuals, intrinsic motivation needs to be supplemented by a sense of self-sufficiency or by an internal perceived locus of control, which can be identified as MOC attending community college to help their families (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). For motivation to thrive in individuals, seeking rewards and avoiding punishments allows people to become autonomous, therefore college-going MOC choosing to enroll, attend and persist in community college by their personal perceived locus of control (i.e. helping their family financially) can be viewed as self-sufficiency.

Additionally, Deci and Ryan (2001) have asserted that it is more gainful and insightful to focus on individual differences, such as fatherhood, parental influence, at-risk status, motivational bearings, and the importance of goals to find out what motivates students than to dispel these individual factors such as Tinto's theory suggests. By concentrating on these factors, individual differences can be identified and conclusions about behavior can be derived from the interaction of human basic needs with the social world, such as college-going students enrolling in community college to help their families.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for both African-American and Latino male community college students contributing to their enrollment in a 2-year community college?



2. Are any of the seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey (Phinney et al., 2006) related to their ethnicity?

### **Summary of the Findings**

**Research question 1.** Research question 1 asked, What are the strongest of the seven motivational factors for both African-American and Latino male community college students contributing to their enrollment in a 2-year community college? Of the seven motivational factors, the most strongly endorsed was to help family. The literature that supported the notion based on this finding is from the works of Palmer et al. (2011), Kim and Hill (2015), and Toldson et al. (2009), who all found that parental involvement and influence were shown to have a great impact on African-American college aspirations. Additionally, it was shown that parental support was highly influential in promoting students of color's self-confidence, efficacy, and motivation. Furthermore, it was concluded that African-American students with strong parental and family support are more likely to be successful in college. However, the two questions asked in the help family section did not suggest that family support and encouragement were the pillars behind the motivational factor. The two questions asked on a 5-point metric; with 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, question seven "to get an education in order to help my parents/family financially and question 32, "it would allow me to help parents/family financially".

Obtaining an education to provide financial assistance for one's family is the premise behind the SMAU's "to help one's family" motivational factor, which can be seen as external consequences affecting internal motivation (Deci, 1975). Thus placing

postsecondary education as an extrinsic motivator for the participants in this study, which SDT would conclude is an integrated regulatory process (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) that makes people behave specifically due to behaviors being consistent with other goals or values, such as helping one's family financially. Whereas, SDT posits that individuals desire the need to feel autonomous and in control of oneself.

Although several variables were not controlled for in this study that may support in identifying why some MOC do not persist and attain academic achievement in postsecondary education—such as age, fatherhood status, and at-risk factors (i.e. low SES, product of a single-parent household)—it was found that the second leading reason that motivated students of color was career/personal; items from this category focused on autonomous-related goals, which the researcher thought would be the most significant factor for the MOC in this study. It was thought that career/personal would be the most prominent factor to better one's life and achieve autonomy. Mason (1998) also considered several variables that have been used in previous studies on the same and similar topics; the variables found to be prevalent for this demographic to develop predictive models of persistence behavior are background variables (i.e., age, enrollment status, educational goals), academic variables (i.e., academic advising, major certainty), and environmental variables (i.e., finances, employment, opportunity to transfer). It was found that, while many of these variables had statistical relevance to the persistence of African-American male community college students, the primary factor contributing to this population's persistence was educational goals. Which further agrees with the findings from the present study that factors such as question 15 “developing oneself personally,” question six “to understand the complexities of the modern world,” and question 23 “to improve my

intellectual capacity” were highly motivational for students of color to enroll in community college. Also, J. L. Moore (as cited in Palmer et al., 2011) found that both Black and White students rely heavily on their families for direction, inspiration, and assurance to facilitate and cultivate postsecondary achievement.

The literature that did not support the findings pertaining to research question one, was Tinto’s (1975) Model of Student Retention. The researcher found that *help family* was the most prevalent factor that motivated MOC to enroll in and attend community college. Tinto’s theory has been widely criticized, but, based on the model and findings from the present study, Tinto’s theory is not supported due to MOC being highly motivated to help family. Tinto’s theory was founded on students disengaging and disconnecting from their previous communities, family, and social connections in order to succeed in postsecondary education. Therefore, Tinto’s model is not supported and the researcher further rejects this theory. Additionally, there was no evidence detailing what supplemental supports (i.e. jobs, careers) the participants in this study were involved in to help their families.

Additionally, Deil-Amen (2011) found that Tinto’s (1975) theory does not provide an understanding of motivational factors surrounding college students’ success. Moreover, the theory is limited to its assessment of student experiences with the college environment rather than focusing on the student’s perception (i.e., belonging, commitment and persistence), which may provide a deeper explanation of college persistence, completion, and attrition rates.

**Research question 2.** Research question 2 asked, Are any of the seven motivational factors from the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised (SMAU) survey (Phinney et al., 2006) related to their ethnicity? This study found no significant difference

in motivation to pursue a community college education as it pertains to race/ethnicity. The research that supported this finding is from the works of Martinez and Fernandez (2004) and Perrakis (2008), which state that community colleges remain to be the leading choice for initial entry into postsecondary education among students of color and this is especially true for African-American and Latino students.

The present study found no significant difference in motivational factors as it pertains to race/ethnicity. The theoretical framework adopted for this study, SDT, states that, regardless of race/ethnicity people engage in self-controlled and purpose-driven actions that are motivated by an inner need to feel autonomous, competent, and related (Park et al., 2011). Additionally, based on the present study, Tinto's (1975) theory also negates the race/ethnicity factor as it pertains to community college students' motivational factors. Tierney (1999) and Wilson (2014) agreed that Tinto's Model of Student Retention theory would be beneficial if ethnic background as a factor is dismissed when rating motivational levels, persistence, completion, and transfer/graduation rates of students in postsecondary education. Tierney and Wilson, along with Tinto, found that dismissing individuals' ethnic background and culture was the answer to success in postsecondary educational environments. Tinto's theory also identified two domains: academic and social integration, which often times is not experienced by students at community colleges (Harris & Wood, 2013). Many community colleges do not foster an inclusive environment and rarely offer organized sports teams, fraternities or sororities that provide social integration and inclusion, such as PWI's and HBCU's (Perrakis, 2008).

Based on the findings, there was no significant difference among race/ethnicity as it pertains to any of the seven motivational factors. Yet the literature showed that when

Flowers (2006) analyzed Tinto's (1975) Model of Student Retention by measuring the effects of African-American males' attendance at a 2-year institution on academic social integration in their first year of college, it was found that informal educational experiences function to influence and cultivate students' commitment to all educational aspirations—prospective, existing, and anticipated—as well as students' commitment to their educational institutions. Thus, disagreeing with the findings of the present study, helping one's family and excelling in one's career/personal life would be primary reasons that students of color are motivated to enroll and persist in community college and postsecondary education.

The literature review for the present study shed light on various factors that were not controlled for in this study; however, the seven motivational factors from the SMAU survey (Phinney et al., 2006) asked questions that pertained to such variables as background (i.e., educational goals), academic, and environment (i.e., employment and opportunity to transfer). Such questions that made references to background variables include: question 12, "I am expected to get a degree" from the *expectation* category and environmental variables included; question 21, "to help me earn more money;" and question 25, "to achieve a position of higher status in society."

### **Conclusions and Implications**

Although the present study set out to uncover the motivational factors for African-American and Latino male community college students in a specific geographical location, several factors remained undiscovered. Factors that continue to be unknown include insight into how other variables, such as age and employment status, affect participants' motivational levels to enroll, attend, and persist in college. Also student perceptions

regarding campus climate, college access and educational financial responsibility were not factored into motivational factors.

It would have been beneficial to provide additional questions on the survey to ask the participants whether their past and current identified motivational levels (i.e. help family, career/personal) propelled them toward academic success (i.e., transfer to a 4-year university or 2-year college degree/certificate) 2 years from the present study. Similarly, it would have also been beneficial to research what further deterred these students from or propelled them toward academic success (i.e., retention) or what may have contributed to the attrition rates for these specific groups by ethnicity and gender.

Lastly, it would have been advantageous to widen the range of students beyond those the researcher sampled for this study. The researcher was unable to generalize the findings from this study to other groups such as male Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other ethnic groups that identify as MOC. Similarly, the researcher was unable to generalize the findings of this study due to the sampling procedures: non-probability sampling. A critical weakness of this study was not comparing other racial/ethnic groups', such as Asian American and White males, perception of motivational factors. These two groups, based on the literature review and current statistics, have the highest degree attainment and graduation rates compared to African-American and Latino males by gender. Measuring these groups' motivational factors as they pertain to community college academic success could have provided more insight as to the differences among each racial/ethnic group.

## **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

For future studies, researchers should include Asian American males, since they also represent and identify as MOC and have proportionally high persistent and attainment rates in postsecondary education. These ethnic groups could be used as a comparison group to African-American and Latino male populations to uncover the major differences between the three male ethnic groups. It would be expected that Asian Americans would score significantly higher in the *expectation* category than African American and Latino male community college students.

Also, using Black instead of African-American as it pertains to racial/ethnic description to define the target population could be useful in identifying the large ethnic group. The researcher encountered several male community college students that shared their disassociation to the term African-American, because they did not directly descend from Africa. The researcher struggled the most with African-American males regarding the race/ethnic identifier than with the Latino male participants. The term Latino, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016) is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race, which encompasses a wide range of the Spanish culture. On the other hand, African-American as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016), is defined as a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, which is ambiguous. When the researcher recruited participants near the community college, several males appeared to have the physical appearance of being African-American, however upon the researcher approaching them and asking if they identified as being African-American, some individuals expressed that they did not identify as being African-American, thus they opted not to participate in the

study. Likewise, Latino is a broad term that generalizes the entire Hispanic culture, therefore it would be helpful to provide various racial/ethnic options or an explanation on the survey that outlines what is included in the broad use of the terms *African-American male* and *Latino male*.

Future researchers should consider performing a longitudinal study on MOC community college students entering as freshman and following their college careers to fully understand what motivates these groups of students and what deters these students from continuing their college pursuit. A longitudinal study on MOC may lead to identifying more in depth factors that contribute to academic success. Also, utilizing a different instrument to conduct the present study may afford different, more generalizable outcomes. For instance, Woods's (2013) Community College Survey of Men instrument may be used to discover additional underlying motivations for MOC community college students. A mixed-methods approach using quantitative and qualitative measures would also be advantageous in understanding the lived experiences of MOC community college students' motivational levels would provide additional insight as to what works for this population beyond race and gender.

Investigating more factors such as cultural norms and expectations, that were not identified as being motivational factors in this study, for various racial/ethnic groups could be beneficial for future researchers in order to gain a better outlook on whether or not cultural belief systems and values are similar and different amongst the various groups being studied, since helping one's family was the strongest motivational factor in the present study. For example, controlling for connectedness in the Latino culture could shed more light on why helping one's family is so significant in community college enrollment



for this ethnic-gender group. Likewise, future researchers should examine the financial aspect of (community) college as it pertains to persistence and degree attainment. The present study did not consider the financial component of college; however, the SMAU survey (Phinney et al., 2006) provided questions that suggested that earning more money was a motivational factor (question 21, to help earn more money).

This study found that African-American and Latino male community college students are highly motivated by helping their families and least motivated by external factors, such as their learning and learning environment, as well as being minimally motivated by their friends according to the findings of the present study. It was found that *encouragement* was ranked third as the most significant factor motivating African-American and Latino community college students to enroll, attend and persist in college. Table 9 describes best practices for MOC community college students and provides references to scholarly works that have identified nine primary motivational factors that have shown to be pivotal in academic success for these students. However, future studies could still gather useful information and data by addressing the following questions:

1. Is there a one-size fits all approach to engaging all MOC at the postsecondary educational level?
2. What attitudinal and behavioral aspects differentiate men from women regarding motivation in postsecondary success?
3. Does self-esteem play a role in MOC postsecondary academic success?
4. What are the campus climate differences of HBCUs, PWIs, and community colleges, beside having a primary racial/ethnic group on campus? Can these climates be mirrored at all types of colleges?

Table 9

*Best Practices and Literature Citations*

Best Practice	Literature Citations(s)
Personal motivation/perception	Deci & Ryan, 2001; Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015; Wilson, 2014; Wood & Palmer, 2013
Persistence	Thomas, 2000; Wood & Williams, 2013
Social and academic integration	Flowers, 2006; Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Perrakis, 2008; Wilson, 2014; Wood, 2012a
Academically prepared	Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Graham, 2013; Harris & Wood, 2013; Land et al., 2014; Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2012; Park et al., 2011; Strayhorn, 2012; Wilson, 2014 Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015
Support due to being at-risk	Land et al., 2014; Mason, 1998
Support based on low income status	Harper & Griffin, 2011; Mason, 1998
Parental support	Harris & Wood, 2013; Land et al., 2014; Mason, 1998; Palmer et al., 2011; Wilson, 2014
Mentoring programs	Gibson, 2014; Harris & Wood, 2013

**Methodological Improvements**

The weaknesses of this study were discussed earlier, and there were also numerous strengths of the present study as well. The primary strength of the present study was the survey tool utilized, the SMAU (Phinney et al., 2006). The tool was established by researchers Côté and Levine (1997) and then revised by Phinney et al. (2006), thus providing the established validity and reliability, which was subsequently confirmed by the present study through an analysis of the data by conducting statistical testing.

Several lessons learned during this research study can assist future researchers when replicating this study. First, to improve the survey tool, including a check box or sentence instructing participants to self-select their ethnicity on the SMAU survey in the demographic questions, would be beneficial and time effective for the researcher. Having

participants self-select their identified race/ethnicity will add to the reliability and validity of the data. In the present study, the researcher was left to circle many of the participant's ethnicity after participants turned their survey in. It was imperative to have this information so that the research questions could be answered appropriately, thus providing accuracy when analyzing the data. However, it should be noted that the researcher verbally asked each participant the same question on the SMAU tool prior to handing out the survey, "Do you identify as either African-American male or Latino male?" Upon confirmation and receiving a "yes" response the researcher provided each willing participant a survey on a clipboard and a pencil. Some of the participants took the initiative of circling their identified race/ethnicity and many others did not. Leaving the researcher responsible of correctly circling participants self-disclosed race/ethnicity. The findings of the research study could have negatively affected if the researcher did not collect this information, did not confirm with each participant their race/ethnicity and reliability and validity of the results would have been adversely compromised.

Also, adding additional demographic questions to the demographic portion of the survey will be beneficial for future studies—such as specific age, whether or not subjects participated in a mentoring program, whether or not participants are first generation college students, if these students came from a single parent home, etc.—in order to gain further insight as to individual and group motivational factors for specific groups of students. Doing so would also provide further information to draw conclusions about various racial/ethnic groups as well as more generalizable data. Additionally, using probability sampling would eliminate limits on generalizing the findings of this study to a broader population.

With 5 years and an unlimited amount of financial resources to improve this study, the researcher would have opted to conduct a longitudinal study and surveyed participants at multiple community college campuses within the Southern California region and offered participants an incentive, such as a \$5 gift card for either food or gasoline. Additionally, the researcher would have added additional racial/ethnic groups, such as Asian American, Native American, and White male students as comparison groups to the chosen MOC in the present study.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Research by scholars in postsecondary education emphasizes the importance of mentoring relationships for MOC, both peer-to-peer and student-to-professional relationships. The literature on underachievement among MOC stresses the importance of institutions creating a supportive environment where MOC are welcomed and offered what they need to stay engaged and perform well academically. Perrakis (2008) found that more funding for students of color should be provided for those that may be at-risk and academically underprepared for postsecondary success. Additionally, Perrakis (2008) found that more administrative expertise is imperative to further understand and identify the academic spectrum of students of color who attend community college.

Although many colleges are trying variations of targeted services for MOC students, there have been few rigorous evaluations of these programs. As a result, little is known about how programs are implemented, whether they adhere closely to the conceived model, whether they actually work to improve academic outcomes, the effect of context (for instance, PWIs compared with HBCU's) and what configuration of components yields the best outcomes from students at lowest harm. This deficit is problematic given the depth

of this issue and the changing demographics of the United States, which suggests that solutions to increase success for MOC should be a higher priority. A demonstration project that tested some of these ideas would shed light on what institutional practices are effective in supporting MOC (Wimer & Bloom, 2014).

The researcher recommends that policy mandates such as the White House initiatives; My Brother's Keeper for boys of color, and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics to continue to develop more opportunities for community leaders and interested individuals to create more quality education programs for underserved, at-risk African-American and Latino communities and families. Many devoted individuals that seek to create and develop more quality educational resources for at-risk MOC become financially exhausted due to the responsibility of providing these resources to multiple families. Such as Gibson's (2014) study on mentoring programs. He found that without initiating and implementing mentoring programs, male, African American college-going students would fall victim to imminent problems, such as a deficiency of career readiness, lack opportunities for growth, and college graduation rates will continue to significantly decrease.

Further, the researcher recommends that at-risk communities offer mentoring programs and community colleges offer free education and resources to prepare men of color for postsecondary education. The graduation disparity does not begin when MOC enter into postsecondary education; it occurs as early as pre-school (Venezia, Kirst & Antonio, 2003), thus making them underprepared and at a disadvantage compared to their peers who have received a quality education since elementary school. Further investigation should be done in urban areas where MOC are excelling from school age to college; and

funding should be directed at mirroring and implementing what is working to prepare men of color for postsecondary academic success. Latino males also require specified attention in regards to specialized curriculums and mentoring programs, however, there is limited research on this large and increasing population, due to many college-aged Latinos, ages 18-24, being pipelined into the jail and prison system (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

### **Practitioner Recommendations**

Many practitioners understand the necessity of providing additional resources to at-risk students and at-risk students of color. However, there is a difference between at-risk students and at-risk students of color based on SES and cultural norms and beliefs, lending a major opportunity for practitioners to focus on cultural proficiency and understanding the importance of being aware of cultural bias. Similarly, with understanding cultural biases, educators can better serve boys of color, thus providing additional supports regarding at-risk factors, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and behavioral and emotional disorders such as emotional dysregulation, depression, and anxiety. Several mental issues and disorders go undiagnosed in men of color for various reasons, such as lack of quality healthcare options, lack of parental support, and lack of parental education.

Further, contributing to the lack of therapeutic support for men of color is the fact that many educators and administrators lack when it comes to possessing a therapeutic background. A therapeutic background for educators can be extremely advantageous for educators who teach and communicate with at-risk students (of color), further enabling this demographic to achieve academic success. A recommendation for practitioners would be to incorporate therapeutic services, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), into mentoring programs, small schools, charter schools, etc. CBT is a form of therapy that

works to target current problems and eliminate unhelpful thinking and behavior (Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, & Fang, 2012). With the use of CBT in low SES communities that contain numerous public schools, academics will cater to students that are seen as at-risk and disadvantaged, thus uncovering the mental barriers these students experience. Many of these students face the unknown when awaking for the day to prepare for school, such as the availability of necessary resources (i.e., adequate and healthy food options, weather appropriate clothes), familial issues and lack of positive adult interactions due to single-parent households, etc., which can be distracting and aid in various other at-risk factors for students of color, such as risky sexual behaviors and gang involvement.

Incorporating more holistic practices into the physical education portion of school could also be beneficial in centering at-risk students (of color) and increasing mindfulness. Such holistic practices include yoga and tai chi. Mentoring programs should also be offered at all public schools in low SES communities. Many of these neighborhoods are laden with single-parent families, with the mother most often serving as the primary parent.

### **Final Summary**

A quantitative, correlational method was employed for the present study to measure students' perceptions of their persistence, potential success, and motivational factors to attend community college. The participants were selected through non-probability sampling in a non-controlled setting utilizing the target population from a community college in the South Bay area of Southern California. Male minority students have consistently and persistently failed to rise above and cross the threshold of higher education degree attainment in large quantities as have other racial/ethnic subgroups and their female counterparts (Vasquez Urias & Wood, 2015).

The population of African-American and Latino males is increasing steadily; thus increasing the prevalence of these two ethnic groups at 2-year community colleges. An extensive literature review demonstrated that male African-Americans and Latinos are the most prominent groups to enroll in community colleges and are the least likely to graduate and transfer.

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational research study was to investigate which of the seven motivational factors measured in the SMAU survey developed by Phinney et al. (2006)—career/personal, humanitarian, prove worth, default, expectation, encouragement, and help family—if any, contribute to African-American male and Latino male community college completion/graduation at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer to 4-year universities. Quantitative research investigates social phenomena or human problems by employing a method using variables that can be measured numerically then analyzed to determine if the proposed theory explicates or predicts the phenomenon of interest (Yilmaz, 2013).

After reviewing the literature regarding MOC in postsecondary education and considering the findings from this study, the foremost leading motivational factor for African-American and Latino male community college students to enroll and persist in college is their desire to help and priority of helping their individual families. The second most rated motivation factor for males in these two racial/ethnic groups to enroll and persist in community college is based on their career/personal goals and pursuits. The least significant motivational factor promoting academic success for these two male racial/ethnic groups were *default* reasons that pertain to feeling pressured by friends and feelings of having no other alternatives but to attend college.



This study employed a survey design and the target population included MOC that were enrolled in a community college in Southern California. The survey was a traditional paper survey that required a writing utensil to complete. The findings of this study suggest that MOC (African-American and Latino) who enroll and attend college highly value family and are motivated to persist in community college by numerous factors that pertain to helping one's family. The most frequently rated factors for male African-American and Latino community college students that motivated these students to enroll are related to helping family, career/personal, encouragement, and prove worth. The least motivating factors for MOC at community colleges were expectation, humanitarian, and default.

Future research should examine attitudinal and behavioral aspects as it relates to gender and various other racial/ethnic groups, such as Asian American and White groups. Further research should investigate campus climates at HBCUs, PWI' .and community colleges to explore why various groups excel in specific postsecondary environments over others. Future research should also explore the effects of therapeutic curricula at public schools to target primary learning inabilities in students who are at risk and predisposed to unfavorable alternatives to postsecondary education, such as jail and prison. Lastly, further research should examine how mentoring programs can promote academic success for at-risk students who are the product of a single-parent household and are at risk based on other environmental factors.

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## APPENDIX A

### Participant Invitation

#### **Examining Educational Motivation in MOC at A Community College in Southern California**

Dear Sir,

My name is Ashley Young. I am a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy program and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying motivational factors in men of color whom attend community college. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a 33-item survey about factors that may or may not motivate African-American and Latino male community college students to enroll in a community college, persist, graduate and/or transfer to 4-year universities.

The survey will be distributed at the strip mall on Wednesday and Friday's between the hours of 12PM and 4PM. The survey should take about 3 minutes to complete.

Although you may not benefit directly from participating in this study, we hope that others in the community/society in general will benefit by gaining a better understanding of how to promote postsecondary education and assist men of color to persist, obtain degrees/certificates, and transfer to 4-year universities.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at an undisclosed residence of the principal researcher on a password-protected computer in statistical software (RStudio). The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also opt out of the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Participation, non-participation or withdrawal will not affect your grades or collegiate standing in any way.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] or my faculty advisor; Dr. Joseph Green at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Pepperdine University at 310-568-5753 or [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu).

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please complete the Student Motivations for Attending University (SMAU) survey. When you are done, please



hand in your survey to myself or use the self-addressed envelope and mail the survey to the P.O. Box. Surveys can be given to the researcher at strip mall on Wednesday's or Friday's between the hours of 12PM and 4PM.

With kind regards,

Ashley Young



## APPENDIX B

### Information/Facts Sheet for Exempt Research

## PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

### INFORMATION/FACTS SHEET FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH

#### **WHY THEY FAIL: EXAMINING EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN MEN OF COLOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS AT A 2-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ashley Young, B.A., M.S. and Joseph Green, B.A., M.S., Ed.D. at the Pepperdine University, because you are a male African-American or male, Latino community college student in Southern California, enrolled and attending 'the' community college. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read this document. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational research study is to investigate which of the seven motivational factors measured in the Student Motivations for Attending University-Revised survey developed by Phinney, Dennis, & Osorio (2006); (career/personal, humanitarian, prove worth, default, expectation, encouragement and help family), if any, contribute to African-American male and Latino male community college completion/graduation at a 2-year community college in Southern California and transfer to 4-year universities.

#### **PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT**

If you agree to voluntarily to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete one paper survey using a writing tool, such as a pencil or pen to complete. The survey will consist of three (3) non-personally demographic questions including: age, ethnicity, and college status by marking "yes" or "no" to each. The next portion of the survey will be a survey that consists of 33 questions based on motivations factor for attending college. The questions will be measured using a continuous scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree." The survey should take approximately 3 minutes. Should you decide during taking the survey you no longer want to participate, you are free to decline completing the survey and discard of your survey at your own discretion.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION**

Your alternative is to not participate in the study. Your academic standing will not be affected should you choose to participate or not in this study.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password-protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of five years. The data collected will be coded and transcribed. There will be no identifiable information obtained in connection with this study. Your name, address or other identifiable information will not be collected.

## **INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Ashley Young at [REDACTED] or the dissertation chairperson, Dr. Joseph Green, at [REDACTED] or if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

## **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT - IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu).

APPENDIX C

Student Motivations for Attending University—Revised (SMAU) Survey

**Please check “Yes” or “No” in the appropriate box for each question.**

1. Are you 18 years or older? Yes No
2. Are you a male, African-American *or* male, Latino? Yes No
3. Are you currently enrolled at ‘**the**’ Community College? Yes No

**Please answer each of the following 33 items on a scale of 1 to 5; with 1 being *strongly disagree* to 5 being *strongly agree*. Please clearly mark your choice.**

**1. It gives me the opportunity to study and learn.**

1  2  3  4  5

**2. To prove wrong those who thought I was not “college material.”**

1  2  3  4  5

**3. To get into an interesting and satisfying career.**

1  2  3  4  5

**4. To help people who are less fortunate.**

1  2  3  4  5

**5. It is better than the alternatives.**

1  2  3  4  5

**6. To understand the complexities of life.**

1  2  3  4  5

**7. To get an education in order to help my parents/family financially.**

1  2  3  4  5

**8. I was encouraged by a mentor or role model.**

1  2  3  4  5

**9. To contribute to the welfare of others.**

1  2  3  4  5

**10. I don’t get anything out of my courses.**

1  2  3  4  5

**11. To achieve personal success.**

1  2  3  4  5

**12. I am expected to get a degree.**

1  2  3  4  5

**13. Parents/family would be very disappointed.**

1  2  3  4  5

**14. To prove wrong those who expected me to fail.**

1  2  3  4  5

**15. To develop myself personally.**

1  2  3  4  5

**16. To obtain the “finer things in life.”**

1  2  3  4  5

**17. There were pressures on me from my friends.**

1  2  3  4  5

**18. To contribute to the improvement of the human condition.**

1  2  3  4  5

**19. To make meaningful changes to the “system.”**

1  2  3  4  5

**20. To prove to others that I can succeed in college.**

1  2  3  4  5

**21. To help earn more money.**

1  2  3  4  5

**22. There are few other options.**

1  2  3  4  5

**23. To improve my intellectual capacity.**

1  2  3  4  5

**24. I owe it to my parents/family to do well in college.**

1  2  3  4  5

**25. To achieve a position of higher status in society.**

1  2  3  4  5

**26. There was someone who believed I could succeed.**

1  2  3  4  5

**27. I often ask myself why I’m in university.**

1  2  3  4  5

**28. To understand complexities of the modern world.**

1  2  3  4  5

**29. There were pressures on me from parents/family.**

1  2  3  4  5

**30. Someone I admired or respected encouraged me.**

1  2  3  4  5

**31. Had no choice but to come to college.**

1  2  3  4  5

**32. It would allow me to help parents/family financially.**

1  2  3  4  5

**33. Would let parents/family down if I didn’t succeed.**

1  2  3  4  5

**End of Survey**

## APPENDIX D

### Researcher Script

**Participants:** Subjects will be identified for recruitment through the face-to-face method of identifying subjects based on criteria (i.e., gender, ethnicity) and the participant will learn about the research by the researcher using the following script:

**Researcher:** Hello. My name is Ashley Young and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a study on both African American and Latino men of color (MOC) at a community college in Southern California. The purpose of this study is to examine reasons behind what motivates African American and Latino males to enroll in a community college, persist and attain a college certificate/degree and/or transfer to 4-year universities.

## APPENDIX E

### Student Motivations for Attending University—Revised Measurement Tool



#### **Student Motivations for Attending University--Revised**

Version Attached: Full Test

**PsycTESTS Citation:**

Phinney, J. S., Dennis, J., & Osorio, S. (2006). Student Motivations for Attending University--Revised [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t09953-000>

**Instrument Type:**

Rating Scale

**Test Format:**

The Student Motivations for Attending University--Revised asks respondents to rate how much they agreed with each item as a reason for their attending college, on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

**Source:**

Phinney, Jean S., Dennis, Jessica, & Osorio, Saloniki. (2006). Reasons to attend college among ethnically diverse college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, Vol 12(2), 347-366. doi: [10.1037/1099-9809.12.2.347](https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.12.2.347)

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PsycTESTS™ is a database of the American Psychological Association

**Student Motivations for Attending University—Revised  
SMAU**

Items

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**Career/personal**

- 21. To help me earn more money
- 16. To obtain the “finer things in life”
- 25. To achieve a position of higher status in society
- 11. To achieve personal success
- 23. To improve my intellectual capacity
- 3. To get into an interesting and satisfying career
- 6. To understand the complexities of life
- 1. It gives me the opportunity to study and learn
- 28. To understand complexities of the modern world
- 15. To develop myself personally

**Humanitarian**

- 18. To contribute to the improvement of the human condition
- 9. To contribute to the welfare of others
- 19. To make meaningful changes to the “system”
- 4. To help people who are less fortunate

**Default**

- 22. There are few other options
- 5. It is better than the alternatives
- 31. Had no choice but to come to college
- 10. I don’t get anything out of my courses
- 27. I often ask myself why I’m in university
- 17. There were pressures on me from my friends

**Expectation**

- 13. Parents/family would be very disappointed
- 33. Would let parents/family down if I didn’t succeed
- 29. There were pressures on me from parents/family
- 24. I owe it to parents/family to do well in college
- 12. I am expected to get a degree

**Prove worth**

- 14. To prove wrong those who expected me to fail
- 2. To prove wrong those who thought I was not “college material”
- 20. To prove to others that I can succeed in college



**Student Motivations for Attending University—Revised  
SMAU**

Items

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**Encouragement**

- 30. Someone I admired or respected encouraged me
- 8. I was encouraged by a mentor or role model
- 26. There was someone who believed I could succeed

**Help family**

- 7. To get an education in order to help my parents/family financially
- 32. It would allow me to help parents/family financially

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*Note.* Participants were asked to rate how much they agreed with each item as a reason for their attending college, on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

APPENDIX F

IRB Approval Letter



Pepperdine University  
24255 Pacific Coast Highway  
Malibu, CA 90263  
TEL: 310-506-4000

## NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 17, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Ashley Young

Protocol #: 16-01-170

Project Title: WHY THEY FAIL: EXAMINING EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN MEN OF COLOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS AT A 2-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Ashley Young:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at [community.pepperdine.edu/irb](http://community.pepperdine.edu/irb).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson

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