Factors that Facilitate Black Male Achievement and Motivation

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11/13/10
Balance

- African American men are a very unique population at risk of experiencing more negative life outcomes (e.g., income, education, health, housing, financing, legal system, etc) than any other racial/gender group, but are potential exemplars of the American Dream
The Morehouse Male Initiative
MMI Mission: to measure the unique impact of the Morehouse experience and the factors that facilitate the affirmative development of African American (AA) males in higher education.

Specifically, the MMI will

1) Assess the personal, academic, and leadership development of students from freshmen through senior year and over the life-course.

2) Identify the specific factors that facilitate the affirmative development of AA males enrolled in various types of institutions (e.g., HBCU’s, PBI’s, and PWI’s)

3) To provide internal and external stakeholders with information that will assist them in educating and developing AA males
Dependent Measures

- demographics
- GPA
- degree aspirations
- academic self-esteem
- institutional integration
- leadership
- racial identity
- stereotypical behaviors of AA males,
- self-esteem
- bases of self-esteem
- depression
- Morehouse Mystique
- school identity
- global competence
- lyrical content, frequency and type of rap music
- brotherhood
- college experiences
- educational aspirations
- work ethic
- gender role attitudes
- attitudes toward women
- spirituality
- perceived discrimination
- risky behaviors
- time spent on various tasks/activities
- self-efficacy
Methods

Surveys
• Morehouse N=638: 249 freshmen, 8 juniors, and 132 seniors
• National: 250 incoming African American male freshmen
• Approx 85% of P’s completed online version (15% hard copy)
• Multiple versions that included subsets of variables
• 20-30 minutes to complete
Results
Table 2. The Impact of Various College Experiences on GPA (4.0 Scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample: Regal U seniors</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positively impacted by the college president</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held leadership position in club/organization</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed your major</td>
<td>3.23**</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being treated poorly/unprofessionally by a faculty member</td>
<td>3.27**</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of dorm step team</td>
<td>3.19**</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in political/civil protest</td>
<td>3.21*</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was in the honors program</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was honored for academic achievement (ex. awards ceremony by your college, an academic department, or other campus office)</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>3.27***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. No=did not have the experience, Yes=had the experience; *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01
Academic and Environmental Factors NOT Related to GPA:

• Being positively impacted by a staff member
• Being positively impacted by college assemblies
• Being positively impacted by new student orientation (freshmen week)
• Participating in student government
• Contributing to a school publication
• Negative treatment by staff
• Being on a college sports team
• Participating in a student protest of the college administration
• Being mentored by an upper classman
• Talking to a faculty member, counselor, or other staff member about personal concerns
• Negative roommate experience
Factors that are positively correlated with GPA among HBCU African American male seniors (higher scores on these variables = higher GPA). Statistically significant factors follow:

- SAT/ACT scores
- High school GPA
- Degree aspirations
- Income
- Academic effort
Please indicate how hard you worked academically during each semester in college.
Factors that are positively correlated with GPA among HBCU African American male seniors (higher scores on these variables = higher GPA). Statistically significant factors follow:

- SAT/ACT scores
- High school GPA
- Degree aspirations
- Income
- Academic effort
- Listening to gospel rap music
- Talking with teachers outside of class
- Participating in clubs/student groups
- Conducting research
- Positive attitudes toward women
- Basing self-esteem on academic performance
Factors that are negatively correlated with GPA among African American male seniors (higher scores on these variables = lower GPA)

- Sagging pants
- Wearing baseball caps in class
- Sexual promiscuity
- Having fist-fights
- Believing that others (White people) are not prejudiced toward AA’s
- Time spent listening to music (in general)
- Time spent engaging in a hobby/skill
- Risky behaviors (drugs, drunkenness, unprotected sex)
Policy Implications and Suggested Practices

• Engage in evidence-based practices and employ thorough assessment
• Increase leadership opportunities for AA males and provide appropriate training for them to be effective
• Provide AA males with positive messaging that connects achievement with Black male identity; will likely increase motivation
• Develop intense, affordable, and possibly mandatory summer pre-college programs for academically underprepared AA male freshmen
• College counselors, advisors, and teachers should be aware of various indicators of non-optimal academic performance and mental health among AA males (e.g., sagging pants, public du-rags, fighting)
• Require a GPA minimum to participate in time-intensive extracurricular activities (e.g., freshman step-team) for freshmen
• Mandatory time management and study skills course with deliverables (e.g., printed weekly schedule) and “real” grade.
Current Research
• Collecting annual data from current samples
• Collecting data from national sample of AA male seniors attending HBCUs and PWIs
• Incorporating variables that assess various AA male identity and achievement theories (e.g., Akbar’s Manhood Development Model, Respectable/Reputational Masculinity via social, cultural, and economic capital)

Future Research
• Deeper analysis of the financial causes of attrition among Black males (e.g., withdrawals, change in family finances)
• Identify the specific factors in pre-college summer programs that facilitate achievement and resolve college readiness issues
• Identify the factors that foster academic maturity and commitment—the ability to understand and internalize the importance of academic achievement and engage in achievement enhancing behaviors—and test them experimentally.