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Black Male Graduation Rates in Community Colleges: Do Institutional Characteristics Make a Difference

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The purpose of this study was to investigate Black male graduation rates in public two-year, degree–granting institutions. Specifically, the researchers were interested in determining the influence (if any) of select institutional characteristics (e.g., attendance intensity, degree of urbanization, geographic region, institutional size) on graduation rates among this populous. Using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from 646 public two-year, degree-granting institutions, findings illustrated that Black male graduation rates differed by institutional characteristics. Black males are more likely to achieve at institutions with higher full-time attendance and institutions that have smaller enrollments. Rural and town colleges were found to have higher graduation rates than suburban and city colleges. Further, findings from this study also indicated that Southeast colleges have higher graduation rates than are seen in several other regions (e.g., New England, Mid-East, Great Lakes, Southwest). Implications for practice and policy are extended.

Each year, Black males matriculate into the postsecondary educational system with the option of choosing between three institutional types. Of these college-going males, 37.1% will attend a four-year college or university while 8% will attend a less than two-year institution (e.g., career colleges, occupational centers). However, the majority (54.9%) will attend two-year colleges (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). While two-year colleges are the predominant pathway for Black males into postsecondary education, it is clear that these institutions are challenged in facilitating students' success. For example, after their first year of enrollment, 11.8% of Black males in two-year colleges will have left without return. By year two, 39.6% will either have left without return or will no longer be enrolled. This trend increases over time, with 72.4% of Black males leaving college without return or not being enrolled six years later (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). These data represent students who did not attain a degree or certificate.

As such, Black male students desiring to enter postsecondary education face uncertain outcomes, with the likelihood being that the vast majority will not attain their academic goals. Even when considering the few Black males who may have transferred or those attending college without certificate or degree goals, the success rates of this group are disturbing. This is unfortunate given the perception held by many Black males that two-year institutions (particularly public two-year colleges) are pathways towards enhanced social, economic, and political outcomes (Bush, 2004; Wood, Harrison, & Turner, 2011; Wood, Hilton, & Harrell, 2011).

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STUDY PURPOSE

Extant research on two-year colleges suggests that institutional type and characteristics are determinants of successful student outcomes (Goble, Rosenbaum, & Stephan, 2008; Mullin, 2010; Waller, Tietjen-Smith, Davis, & Copeland, 2008; Wassmer, Moore, & Shulock, 2004). Similarly, this research connotes that some institutions are more successful in yielding positive outcomes for Black males than others; this notion was the guiding motive of this study. Thus, the authors sought to determine which two-year institutions are more successful in facilitating Black male success. The purpose of this study was to investigate Black male graduation rates in two-year, degree-granting institutions. Specifically, the researchers were interested in determining the influence (if any) of select institutional characteristics (e.g., attendance intensity, degree of urbanization, geographic region, institutional size) on graduation rates among this populous.

This research focused on the role that institutions can have in facilitating differential outcomes for Black males. If a student entered a public two-year program they would be expected to graduate in two years, referred to as graduating within 100% of normal time. For this investigation, graduation rates were viewed at 150% of normal time, indicating that students entered into a community college and completed within three years. This liberal calculation of the graduation rate allowed us to capture data on students who (a) may have needed to take remedial coursework during initial semesters in college; (b) may have had short periods of nonenrollment; or (c) may have encountered one or two semesters of low performance but managed to persist. This study was thereby guided by five research questions, they are as follows: Is there a difference in mean institutional graduation rates among Black males by the following institutional characteristics: (a) institutional profile; (b) institutional size; (c) urbanization; (d) geographic region; and (e) institutional governance? The null hypotheses employed in this study assumed that there were no differences in Black male graduation rates by select institutional characteristics (Questions 1–5).

This research is among a limited number of studies focused on Black males in public two-year colleges that explore the role of institutional characteristics in their persistence and graduation rates (see Flowers, 2006; Glenn, 2003–2004). It is the hope of the researchers that findings from this study can be used to better aid Black males in selecting postsecondary institutions that can facilitate positive academic outcomes (as measured by graduation rates). The next section of this manuscript will review the existing research on Black males in two-year colleges.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Currently, there is a dearth of research on Black males in two-year colleges, particularly on the effect of institutional characteristics on student outcomes. However, two primary studies have provided initial insights in this area. Flowers (2006), using national-level data, examined differences in academic and social integration among Black males in two- and four-year institutions. Findings from his study illustrated significant differences in integration experiences. For example, Flowers noted that Black males at two-year institutions experience lower academic integration than their four-year counterparts. He found that these students are less likely to attend study groups outside of class, meet with advisors, or speak with faculty about academic matters outside of class. Further, Flowers' (2006) work also indicated significant differences with respect to social integration, with Black males at two-year colleges being less likely to participate in school

clubs, intramural sports, attend music or fine arts activities, and go places with their classmates. As demonstrated by these findings, Black males at two-year institutions have markedly different academic and social experiences than their four-year counterparts. Based upon research, which suggests that lower levels of integration are associated with lower success rates (e.g., persistence, graduation), Flowers' (2006) findings infer that Black males are less likely to succeed in two-year institutions.

Employing a dataset comprised of Texas community colleges, Glenn (2003–2004) explored institutional characteristics associated with high and low producing community colleges. His analysis centered on the impact of academic and student services programming on Black male retention rates. Glenn (2003–2004) noted numerous overlaps in programming between high and low producing colleges (e.g., basic skills testing, orientation, tutorial programs, counseling services). However, he identified key differences in the services offered at high producing colleges. High producing colleges offered freshman-only advising and orientation for credit. These colleges also implemented required tutoring programs, tracked test score consistency with placement, required that students meet with advisors, and monitored student attendance.

While few studies have examined institutional characteristics in accordance to Black male success in two-year colleges, other scholars have examined this topic on two-year college success as a whole. Within these studies, there are four recurrent themes. First, extant literature suggests that colleges with higher percentages of students of color tend to have lower success rates (e.g., retention, graduation, transfer) than those with lower percentages of minority students (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2005; Calcagno, Bailey, Jenkins, Keinzl, & Leinbach, 2008; Goble et al., 2008). For example, Wassmer et al., (2004) conducted an analysis on public two-year colleges in California with a focus on institutional characteristics predictive of transfer. Their analyses found that colleges having higher percentages of African American and Latino students experienced markedly lower transfer rates than those with lower percentages of these student groups.

Second, the composition of college faculty is directly related to student outcomes. Colleges with higher part-time faculty members are significantly less likely to have higher retention and graduation rates than those with lower percentages of these faculty members (Bailey et al., 2005; Calcagno et al., 2008; Goble et. al., 2008; Jacoby, 2006). Jacoby's investigation of 1,209 public two-year colleges is one example of this line of research. His study used three analyses, employing multiple definitions of graduation rates, to illustrate that larger percentages of part-time faculty were negatively predictive of student success. Some research has even pointed to the importance of faculty compensation. Windham and Hackett (1997) used state-level data from the Florida community college system to illustrate that a higher level of faculty compensation leads to greater levels of student success.

Third, student outcomes are directly related to institutional size. However, the research in this area illustrates disparate findings. For instance, Goble et al., (2008) examined student retention rates among low, middle, and high achieving students in comparison with institutional characteristics. This research found that high achieving students perform better at midsized institutions as opposed to large institutions (15,000 or more students). They also found that midlevel students achieved better in smaller schools in comparison to larger schools. In contrast, findings from other studies illustrate that students attending medium-sized colleges (1,000–5,000 students) are less likely to graduate than those attending smaller colleges (1,000 students; Bailey et al., 2005;

Calcagno et al., 2008). Other research has shown that students attending colleges with larger enrollments have greater levels of success (Wassmer et al., 2004; Windham & Hackett, 1997).

Fourth, degree of urbanization is an integral consideration in student outcomes. Degree of urbanization refers to the classification of a two-year college with respect to proximity to urban centers. Typically, classifications given include the following: rural; town; suburban; and urban. Waller and Tietjen-Smith (2009) examined retention rates for part- and full-time students, finding that part-time students fare better at city and suburban institutions in comparison to rural institutions. Similarly, they found that full-time students have higher retention rates at suburban institutions in comparison to town and rural institutions. In addition, research from Goble et al. (2008) illustrated that suburban colleges facilitate better performance rates for midlevel achieving students than do urban colleges.

These themes (e.g., proportion of students of color, faculty composition, institutional size, degree of urbanization) have been examined at a greater-level with a focus on the general student population. Although much research has centered on public two-year college students as a whole, less interest has been given examining differential outcomes by student subgroups (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomics). This study continues down the path of previous research, yet has an intentional interest in Black male student success. While this section has outlined research on institutional characteristics impacting student success, the next section will discuss the methods used in this study.

METHODS

Data Collection

Data from this study was derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS provides institutional-level data from Title IV postsecondary institutions (those institutions approved by the government to award federal student financial aid). This data center is an online tool, which allows users to identify variables of interest on one or more institutions and to download such data for analytic purposes. Each year, more than 6,700 postsecondary institutions complete IPEDS surveys, collecting data in seven primary areas: institutional characteristics; institutional cost; human and financial resources; institutional finances; student persistence and graduation; enrollment data; and student financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

The institutional population examined in this study was delimited to public two-year, degree-granting institutions. Given that the focus of this study was to investigate differences (if any) in Black male graduation rates by institutional characteristics, the population was further delimited to institutions where a minimum of 10 Black, non-Hispanic students were accounted for in the cohort being examined. As a result, the final population of institutions included in this study consisted of 646 public two-year, degree-granting institutions. Graduation rate data was computed for each institution using 2008 completion rates from Black/African American (non-Hispanic) male degree/certificate-seeking students at 150% of normal time. A completion ratio was computed by dividing completers within 150% of normal time by the adjusted cohort (revised cohort minus exclusions). Thus, the graduation rates presented refer to the average graduation rate for each institutional characteristic examined in this study. Several institutional variables were investigated in this research, they included the following:

- Institutional profile—reflecting classifications of student enrollment intensity, such as: higher part-time (more than 60% of students are part-timers), mixed part-time/full-time (39 to 59% of students are part-timers), and medium full-time (61 to 91% of students are full-time). The institutional profile category of higher full-time two-year was excluded from this study as there was an insufficient sample size for analysis. This category would have encompassed institutions with 92% or higher full-time students. In a community college context, this institutional category would be an anomaly.
- Institutional size—representing a taxonomy of full-time enrollment types, including: very small (fewer than 500), small (500–1,999), medium (2,000–4,999), large (5,000–9,999), and very large (10,000 or more).
- Urbanization—indicating the degree of urbanization of a campus using the following classifications: rural (census-defined rural territory outside an urban cluster), town (inside an urban cluster and outside an urbanized area), suburban (territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area), and city (territory inside a principal city and inside an urbanized area).
- Geographic region—reflecting IPEDS geographic classification of regions, these regions and affiliated states (using abbreviations) include: New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT); Mid-East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA); Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI); Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD); Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV); Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX); and Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA). Rocky mountain colleges (e.g., (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY) were excluded from this analysis due to a small sample size.
- Institutional governance—representing the formal organization of a college divided into two categories. The first includes colleges that are part of a system or corporate entity, and the second includes colleges that are not part of a system or corporate entity.

Data Analysis

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed in this study. The analyses employed in this research focused on differences in Black male graduation rates in public two-year, degree-granting institutions by institutional profile (1 x 4 design), institutional size (1 x 5 design), urbanization (1 x 4 design), and geographic region (1 x 7 design). This procedure (ANOVA) was selected given that the outcome variable was continuous while the independent variables (referred to as factors) were categorical, having two or more levels. In cases where omnibus tests indicated significant differences post-hoc procedures (e.g., Dunnett's C) were used for pairwise comparisons. Dunnett's C is a post-hoc procedure for samples with unequal variances. This technique was used as exploratory data analysis indicated that the homogeneity of variance of assumption was not met. Effect sizes were computed for each of the six questions. As indicated by Green and Salkind (2011), eta square (η^2) is reported small (.01), medium (.06), and large (.14), respectively. The researchers reports results using 95% confidence intervals.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Interactions may be taking place between the multiple factors examined. However, due to sample size limitations across levels of the factors examined,

factorial ANOVA could not be employed. Analysis of covariance procedures could also not be employed, as the homogeneity of slopes assumption was not met. Also, IPEDS only presents graduation data for full-time, first-time, degree and certificate seeking students. Many community college students do not fit this definition as these institutions serve a preponderance of part-timers, nondegree seeking, and noncredit students (Gonzalez, 2011). For example, Offenstein and Shulock (2009) reported that only 39% of community college students fit the federal government's criteria for inclusion in IPEDS. Further, IPEDS does not distinguish between remedial and nonremedial students. This is important as remedial students invariably take longer to complete their degrees than nonremedial students (Gonzalez, 2011). Additionally, federal policy requires students to be degree or certificate seeking in order to obtain financial aid. Thus, a student who is attending community college for personal enrichment or to learn a skill may incorrectly indicate that they are seeking a certificate or degree in order to receive aid (Offenstein & Shulock, 2009). As a result of many reasons above, this study elected to use a graduation rate of 150% of normal time. The usage of this time frame mitigates some of the challenges associated with IPEDS data. While this section discussed the methods used in this study, the next section will address study findings.

FINDINGS

The first analysis investigated whether institutional attendance intensity profile (e.g., higher part-time, mixed part-time/full-time, medium full-time, and higher full-time) was associated with differences in mean graduation rates among Black males. Levene's test for equality of error variances was significant ($p <$. 001), indicating that homogeneity of variance could not be assumed. A Welch procedure indicated that the test was significant, asymptotic $F = 8.449$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The effect size between institutional profile and Black male graduation rate, as assessed by η^2, was between small and medium, accounting for 3% of the variance of the dependent variable. Follow-up tests were conducted in order to examine pairwise differences among factor means. Post-hoc tests were conducted using Dunnett's C test (which does not rely upon an assumption of equal variances among groups). Post-hoc tests indicated significant pairwise differences in several comparisons (see Table 1).

Higher part-time institutions had significantly lower mean scores than medium full-time institutions, a difference of 7.68 points ($p < .05$). Higher part-time institutions also had significantly lower mean scores than mixed part-time/full-time institutions, illustrating a mean gap of 3.51 points ($p < .05$). While mixed part-time/full-time institutions had lower mean scores than

TABLE 1
95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Mean Changes in Graduation Rate

Profile	*M*	*SD*	*Higher PT*	*Mixed PT/FT*
Higher PT	11.47	12.73		
Mixed PT/FT	14.98	17.38	−6.51 to −.52*	
Medium FT	19.14	16.70	−12.82 to −2.53*	−9.55 to −1.22

*Denotes significance.

medium full-time institutions, representing a mean point difference of 4.16, this finding was not significant. In all, findings suggest that colleges with higher levels of students attending full-time had higher graduation rates than those with high part-time enrollments.

The second analysis examined graduation rate differences focusing on institutional size (e.g., very small, small, medium, large, very large). Using the Welch test, between subjects differences were significant, asymptotic $F = 28.65$, $p < .001$. As such, the null hypothesis was rejected. The effect size between institutional size and mean graduation rates among Black males, as assessed by η^2, was large, representing 8.1% of the variance of the dependent variable. Dunnett's C post-hoc tests indicated many significant pairwise differences (see Table 2).

Very small colleges had significantly higher graduation rates than large colleges and very large colleges, with mean point differences of 15.22 and 14.73 points, respectively ($p < .05$). Small colleges were found to have significantly higher graduation rates than medium colleges, with a point difference of 6.05 ($p < .05$). A similar pattern existed between small colleges and both large and very large colleges, with average mean point differences of 10.32 to 9.83, both of which were significant differences ($p < .05$). Medium size institutions had significantly higher mean graduation rates among Black males than large and very large institutions, indicating a difference of 4.27 to 3.79 points ($p < .05$). No significant differences were detected between large and very large institutions ($p =$ n.s.).

The third analysis conducted in this study focused on potential mean differences by degree of urbanization (e.g., rural, town, suburban, city; see Table 3). Using the Welch test, findings indicated that there were significant differences in graduation rates among groups, asymptotic $F = 9.34$, $p < .001$. As such, the null hypothesis was rejected. The effect size between urbanization and mean graduation rates among Black males, as assessed by η^2, was approaching large, representing 5% of the variance of the dependent variable. Follow-up procedures, using Dunnett's C, indicated several areas with significant pairwise comparisons.

TABLE 2
95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Mean Changes in Graduation Rate

Size	*M*	*SD*	*Very Small*	*Small*	*Medium*	*Large*
Very Small	23.41	24.55				
Small	18.50	19.67	−7.83 to 17.63			
Medium	12.46	12.65	−1.39 to 23.29	1.64 to 10.45*		
Large	8.19	6.09	2.96 to 27.48*	6.14 to 14.49*	1.53 to 7.01*	
Very Large	8.67	6.32	2.23 to 27.13*	5.24 to 14.42*	.44 to 7.12*	−3.52 to 2.54

*Denotes significance.

TABLE 3
95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Mean Changes in Graduation Rate

Urbanization	*M*	*SD*	*Rural*	*Town*	*Suburban*
Rural	15.93	16.92			
Town	19.48	20.34	−9.30 to 2.22		
Suburban	11.04	11.87	.58 to 9.21*	2.99 to 13.88*	
City	10.88	11.79	1.14 to 8.97*	3.46 to 13.73*	−3.28 to 3.59

*Denotes significance.

While rural colleges had lower (though nonsignificant) graduation rate differences with town colleges, they had significantly higher graduation rates for Black males than suburban and city colleges. The average mean point difference between a rural college and suburban college was 4.91 while the point difference with city colleges was 5.05. Town college comparisons also illustrated significant differences. Town colleges were found to have higher graduation rates than both suburban and city colleges, with mean point differences of 8.42 and 8.59, respectively ($p <$ .05). No significant differences were detected between suburban and city colleges ($p =$ n.s.).

The fourth analysis examined whether geographical region (e.g., New England, Mid East, Great Lakes, Plains, Southeast, Southwest, Far West) resulted in differential graduation rates among Black males in two-year, degree granting institutions. A Welch statistic was computed in order to assess mean differences (if any) among these regions. This test was significant, asymptotic $F = 13.351$, $p < .001$. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The effect size of the relationship between region and Black male graduation rate, as assessed by η^2, was large, accounting for 7.1% of the variance of the dependent variable. Follow-up tests, using Dunnett's C test, illustrated some significant differences in pairwise comparisons. Table 4 presents regional graduation means and standard deviations for pairwise comparisons using the 95% confidence interval. New England colleges had lower mean graduation rates than colleges in the Southeast, a point difference of 12.10 ($p < .05$). New England colleges also exhibited significantly lower mean scores than colleges in the Far West, illustrating a mean point difference of 7.58 ($p < .05$). Mideast colleges were found to have significantly lower graduation rates than colleges in the Southeast and in the Far west, with mean point differences of 10.99 and 6.47, respectively ($p <$ .05). Great Lakes colleges were also found to have lower graduation rates than Southeast colleges, with mean differences of 7.67 ($p < .05$). As noted, Southeast colleges had higher graduation rates than New England, Mid East, and Great Lakes colleges. Southeast colleges also had significantly higher rates than Southwest colleges, illustrating a mean point difference of 6.88 ($p < .05$).

The final analysis in this study examined whether governance was associated with mean differences in institutional graduation rates among Black males. The Welch test indicated that there were significant differences in graduation rate by governance type, *asymptotic F=11.687, p < .001.* That being said, the effect size as assessed by η^2, was small, only accounting for 2% of the variance in the outcome. Given that the governance factor only had two levels, post-hoc procedures were not employed. The first level represented institutions that were part of an entity or corporate system, while the second level represented institutions that were not part of an entity or corporate system. In essence, findings indicated that institutions that were part of systems had higher mean graduation rates ($M = 15.69$, $SD = 16.13$) than institutions that were not part of a system ($M = 11.53$, $SD = 14.54$).

DISCUSSION

Findings from this study provide insight to the role of institutional characteristics in facilitating differential graduation rates for Black male students. Analyses illustrated that students generally perform better at institutions with greater levels of full-time attendance. While the topic of attendance patterns and student outcomes is underdeveloped with institutional-level analyses, extant research using student-level analyses are more common. Extant research on Black males in the two-year colleges illustrate that students who attend college on a part-time basis are significantly

TABLE 4
95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Mean Changes in Graduation Rate

Region	*M*	*SD*	*New England*	*Mid East*	*Great Lakes*	*Plains*	*Southeast*	*Southwest*
New England	6.47	6.69						
Mid East	7.58	6.33	−6.03 to 3.79					
Great Lakes	10.90	14.56	−10.89 to 2.03	−8.54 to 1.91				
Plains	12.65	12.92	−13.22 to .86	−10.98 to .86	−9.00 to 5.51			
Southeast	18.57	18.47	−17.67 to − 6.53*	−15.05 to − 6.93*	−13.52 to − 1.82*	−12.40 to .55		
Southwest	11.69	15.20	−12.07 to 1.62	−9.79 to 1.57	−7.87 to 6.28	−6.65 to 8.55	.61 to 13.14*	
Far West	14.05	12.33	−13.86 to − 1.31*	−11.45 to − 1.49*	−9.67 to 3.37	−8.49 to 5.68	−1.12 to 10.15	−9.25 to 4.54

*Denotes significance.

less likely than full-time students to persist (Freeman, 2003; Hampton, 2002; Miller, 2006). For example, findings from Hagedorn, Maxwell, and Hampton (2001–2002) found that "with each additional credit hour of enrollment, the likelihood of retention through semesters one, two, and three increased by 18.7%, 31.2%, or 21.4%, respectively" (p. 260). This finding extends this notion beyond the student-level to the institutional-level as well.

This study has indicated that Black male students experience differential success based upon institutional size. Generally, the smaller the institution, the more likely these males are to graduate. This finding contrasts research from Wassmer et al., (2004) and Windham and Hackett (1997) who found that college students transfer and graduate at higher rates from institutions with larger enrollments. In general, these findings echo those from Bailey et al., (2005) and Calcagno et al., (2008) who found that smaller institutions more likely to facilitate the success of students in comparison to medium sized colleges. However, while these studies found significant differences between medium and small colleges, this research has indicated that smaller colleges have greater rates than medium, large, and very large colleges.

Previous studies (Goble et al., 2008; Waller & Tietjen-Smith, 2009), found that degree of urbanization was associated with varying levels of student success. In general, this previous research indicates that suburban and city colleges benefit from higher graduation rates. In contrast, this current study found the opposite, with Black males having higher graduation rates at rural and town colleges as opposed to suburban and city colleges. This finding is concerning, given that rural and town colleges only comprise 12.5% of Black male enrollment, much lower than their enrollments in urban (47.9%) and suburban (39.4%) colleges (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). In terms of region, this study found differences between Black male graduation rates by region. Study findings indicated that Southeast colleges had higher graduation rates than are seen in several other regions (e.g., New England, Mid-East, Great Lakes, Southwest). In particular, the contrast between colleges in the Southeast, with average graduation rates of 18.57% are glaring in comparison to New England colleges that have average Black male graduation rates at 6.47%. In all, findings from this study add additional insight to the role of institutional characteristics in facilitating differential outcomes for Black male collegians.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Extant research has suggested that Black males face challenges in their persistence and attainment in postsecondary institutions (Allen, 1986; Cuyjet, 1994; Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004; Harvey, 2002), particularly in the two-year colleges (Brown, 2007; Fortson, 1994; Jordan, 2008; Pope, 2006; Stevens, 2006; Wilkins, 2005). As a result, this study set out to explore whether institutional types resulted in differential outcomes for Black males attending two-year colleges. Moreover, this research has shown that institutional characteristics do indeed result in significantly different graduation rates for these students. This study can provide school counselors (middle and high school), college consultants, and college outreach officials with valuable insight of the types of institutions Black males are more successful in completing degrees. Such insight can be used by schools and school districts to build partnerships with community colleges matching the characteristics found in this study.

Partnership activities may include informal, classroom presentations from college representatives. Presenters may be staff members from specific departments, such as admissions and

financial aid, or current Black male students sharing their college experiences. The presentations should be utilized as an opportunity to share information about the college as well as allow prospective students to ask questions. This type of intervention offers youth the opportunity to hear directly from other Black male students about the realities of higher education. Another activity may include organizing coordinated campus visits to postsecondary institutions with characteristics indicative of greater student success. Tour guides could be either college alumni or currently enrolled Black male students. Particular points of interest may include residence halls, campus libraries, the administration building, or any other location that is significant to the college's history. Campus visits can serve as an opportunity to expose Black males to postsecondary education, thereby sowing the seeds about college-going in the minds of these youth. By experiencing a campus environment firsthand, students can gain a better idea of the type of institution that best meets their personal needs.

Perhaps the most beneficial outcome that may develop from these partnerships is articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions. Community college outreach officials (especially those who are part of large multicampus districts) can use the information derived from this study to steer Black men to campuses within their district that have institutional characteristics that may lead to greater academic outcomes. Secondary districts could work to establish admissions agreements that enable their students to attend colleges that are more successful in graduating Black males. For example, students from a particular school district who meet set benchmarks (i.e., grades, course pattern, and testing) may be offered provisional admission to programs of choice at institutions with characteristics that match those found in this study. While many two-year colleges are open-access institutions, many have high-impact programs with waiting lists.

In addition to the implications for educators, this study is also beneficial to students and their families. While many community college students select institutions due to their location and cost (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Somers et al., 2006), students and their families should be encouraged to make informed decisions about the institutions they attend. For example, Black males who are aware that their chances of succeeding are higher at certain institutions may be more likely to focus on positioning themselves for admission at desired campuses. This can put these students on a track for success beginning as early as middle school. Parents who lack a formal education, yet are concerned about their child's academic success, may struggle with knowing how to help their son or daughter. This study's findings may help guide them in not only determining successful outcomes for their student, but also understanding the path for how to get him/her there. In all, findings from this study illustrated that Black male graduation rates differed by institutional characteristics. Black males are more likely to achieve at institutions with higher full-time enrollments and small enrollment. Rural and town colleges were found to have higher graduation rates than suburban and city colleges. Further, findings from this study also indicated that Southeast colleges have higher graduation rates than are seen in several other regions.

Further research is needed to better understand what institutional-level factors serve to facilitate differential student success at these institutions. Such investigations should examine programming, processes, and practices between colleges with high part-time and full-time enrollment. Understanding the institutional-level factors employed at colleges with high levels of full-time enrollment may be informative for improving success at predominantly part-time institutions. Future research should also be conducted within very small colleges to determine factors that lead them to be more successful in graduating Black male collegians. In particular, emphasis

should be given to examining whether a unique organizational culture, offerings, or programming exists within these colleges, which facilitate their success. Finally, we suggest that future research explore various institutional and student-level factors in an effort to better understand characteristics that may lead to higher graduation rates among Southeast colleges. Such studies can use a comparative approach, examining differential factors between this region and colleges in the Mid-East, Great Lakes, and Southwest.

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