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By

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A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE MOTIVATION OF
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES TO COMPLETE THE DOCTORATE

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

African-American men face substantial barriers to their educational development. Yet, despite the associated barriers to doctorate completion at Majority White Institutions (MWIs), some African-American men achieve the degree. Whereas, motivation is deemed to be important for individuals to complete the doctorate, little knowledge exists concerning motivation's role for African-American men in completing the doctorate.

A qualitative study employing interpretive methods was conducted of 12 African-American men who achieved doctorates at MWIs. The tenets of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), comprising two of four sub-theories (Ryan & Deci, 2000) including Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory, were used to explore motivation's role for the men in completing the doctorate.

According to the SDT model, the elements of Basic Needs Theory including autonomy, competence, and relatedness surfaced in the findings and their satisfaction was found to help African-American men complete the doctorate. The findings also suggest that African-American men were motivated extrinsically to pursue the doctorate through their identification with individuals possessing the degree. Furthermore, integrating doctorate achievement with each of the research participant's values, needs, and sense of self was an additional feature of extrinsic motivation to complete the degree.

Advice was offered by the participants to African-American men considering doctorate pursuit; and considerations were identified for higher education. The findings imply that strategies to develop self-esteem and self-efficacy at the elementary and secondary education levels, and strategies that cultivate religious values are needed to help African-American boys become equipped for the highest education levels.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Both society and individuals benefit both economically and socially when more people engage in and complete their higher education (Rovai, Gallien, & Stiff-Williams, 2007). Economically, there are benefits arising from increased tax revenues, greater productivity, increased consumption, increased workforce flexibility, and a decreased reliance on governmental support. Socially, the public benefits through increased charitable giving and service, a higher quality of civic life, reduced crime, social cohesion with an appreciation of diversity, and improved technology access and use. Correspondingly, individuals benefit with higher sales and benefits, employment, increased savings, improved working conditions, and both professional and personal mobility. Moreover, individuals gain increased personal status, an improved quality of life for offspring, improved health; they make better consumer decisions, and engage in more leisure activities (Merisotis, 2003). As Yorke and Longden (2004) point out, "Success in higher education brings with it a range of benefits" that include "the enhancement of cultural and social capital" and a commensurate standard of living (p. 6). Students who obtain college and graduate level degrees apparently gain access to these benefits, help resolve societal problems through their presence in the professional labor force, and contribute to the global economy. Thus, gaining a college education holds a value to both society and individuals.

Still, there is a further value in persisting to achieve a doctorate. "The requirements of the information age, the growth in technology-driven industry, and the new economy place added emphasis on the need for an educated workforce," (Rovai, Gallien, & Stiff-Williams, 2007). In 2006, individuals between the ages of 35-44 with a

high school diploma or equivalent earned about $39,732 a year. A bachelor's degree almost doubled the income potential for a person in the same age bracket to $72,126. A master's degree increased the income level to $86,680, and a terminal degree resulted in income more than $126,954 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Since the earning capacity appears to increase as the level of education increases, earning a doctorate can warrant a higher salary while also lifting one's access to benefits economically and socially. For instance, in the case of African Americans, the only equivalence in annual wages between African Americans and Whites occurs when African Americans are college graduates (Johnson & Neal, 1998). Thus, for African Americans to excel economically and socially, the need exists for more African Americans to achieve undergraduate, graduate, and terminal degrees.

In the case of African-American men, small numbers are obtaining doctorates, such that would afford them the opportunity to benefit from the economy's need for increasingly skilled professional employees and allow them the opportunity to help resolve some of society's problems through their representation in the professional labor force. The research shows that the United States population consists of thirteen percent (13%) African Americans and eighty percent (80%) European Americans (U.S. Census Bureau Report, 2007). With regard to doctorate achievement, according to the report of the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2007), which is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to education in the United States and other nations, African Americans earned five point six percent (5.6%) of the total 56,067 doctoral degrees conferred for the 2005-2006 academic year. However, African-American males earned only 3.8% (1,081) of the 28,634 doctoral degrees

conferred to males in this same period (NCES, 2007). The rate is less, in part, due to the fact that the undergraduate college completion rate of African Americans is low, thereby resulting in an even smaller pool of African-American males in the pipeline to enter graduate school. This phenomenon—the low rate of doctoral achievement by African-American males—adversely affects the African-American community overall with regard to the provision of role models in professions, assumption of leadership roles, and contributions to the economy.

African Americans and Gender Differences

With respect to gender differences among African Americans, it is relevant that in 1976, African-American men earned sixty-one percent (61%) of all doctorates that were awarded to African Americans (NCES, 2007). This has changed, however, with African-American men now trailing African-American women by twenty-six percent (26%) and earning thirty-five percent (35%) of all doctorates awarded to African Americans (NCES, 2007). The completion rate for the bachelor's degree for African-American women is 11% while the rate is 7.6% for African-American men (NCES, 2007). The completion rate for the master's degree for African-American women is 11.8% while the rate is 7.1% for African-American men and the completion rate for the doctoral degree for African-American women is 7.4% while the rate for African-American men is 3.8% (NCES, 2007). At each degree level, the completion rate for African-American men is less than that of African-American women.

Some preliminary research of this problem would suggest that some explanations for the waning African-American male doctoral completion rate might be related to issues of racism, issues of white privilege, and/or individual and social problems related

to persistence. Turning briefly to the issue of racism, David Wellman (1993), in *Portraits of White Racism*, has defined racism as a system of advantage based on race. This definition refers to a system that encompasses cultural messages, institutional policies and practices, and individuals' beliefs and actions (Tatum, 1997). Racism constitutes lived experiences and such lived experiences have been recurrent among many African Americans who have encountered racism among whites who discriminate against them (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). The discrimination involves treating similarly situated individuals differently because of race, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, or national origin (Delgado, 2001). Discrimination not only is "painful and stressful in the immediate situation and aftermath" but also has a "cumulative impact on particular individuals, their families, and their communities" (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 16). Any repeated experience of racism can affect individually one's understanding of life; moreover, when middle-class and other African Americans experience racial hostility and discrimination on a daily basis, it can be termed "institutional racism". As a consequence, the literature infers that an African-American male pursuing a doctorate might adopt an attitude that no matter how hard he works or is able to achieve status, he will not be protected from racial oppression in the abundant institutional arenas of society.

A second issue identified as associated with the decline in doctoral completion rates of African-American men concerns white privilege, which can be viewed as a complement to racism. White privilege may be viewed as, "the systematic advantages of being white" (Tatum, 1997, p. 8). White privilege "ensures domination and control for those who continue to perpetuate the status quo, consciously or otherwise" (Davidson, Davidson, & Crain, 2000, p. 3). These "privileges are those daily interactions with

individuals and society that help individuals experience themselves in the center of their world. The center is where power, resources, and money (and a concomitant sense of social efficacy) are located" (Swignonski, 1996, p. 154). Since it can be assumed that most of the faculty members at Majority White Institutions (MWIs) who teach in doctoral programs are European Americans, it can be assumed that African-American men in doctoral programs at MWIs are affected by white systemic white privilege. If an African-American man encounters racism in his institution of higher learning, it is reasonable to surmise that he might be also a victim of white privilege.

The third issue, persistence failure, may be viewed as further contributing to the decline in African-American male doctorate achievement. Some aspects of persistence failure can include lack of institutional or faculty support, lack of participation in professional academic activities, and lack of academic preparation (Clevell, 1987). Concerning this issue, in studying the factors influencing persistence and non-persistence of Black and Hispanic doctoral students at the graduate entry level, along with institutional practices that affect minority participation in graduate education regarding the retention of Black and Hispanic doctoral students, Beatrice Chu Clevell (1987) found that the level of support for minority students varied greatly among colleges. Characteristics and experiences of individuals who persisted included high achievement in high school, supportive advisers, participation in professional activities during graduate school, and a desire for knowledge. Efforts that seemed to encourage minority student participation included an institution-wide policy regarding minority graduate students, coordination of services for minority students by a unit above the departmental level, special admissions arrangements, and support services focused on minority

students' needs (Clevell, 1987). Other positive aspects related to the persistence of these doctoral students included being satisfied with their academic program, peer interaction, and financial support by their institutions (Kahn & Nauta, 2001).

Review of the research of the early 1990s on African-American graduate students' persistence revealed, contrary to earlier findings, that "traditional factors used to predict European American students' persistence are invalid for predicting African-American graduate students' success" (Faison, 1993, p. 2). For instance, Faison identified reasons for a lack of participation or persistence among African-American students as due to a lack of mentoring relationships. Factors that Faison identified for this persistence failure included the racial makeup of available mentors in higher education, the cultural and interactional differences that exist between African-American students and the predominantly white faculty, and the difficulty in overcoming the financial strain of pursuing a graduate degree.

Other obstacles have been found that could contribute to the decline in doctoral degree completion. In this regard, a qualitative study was conducted of doctoral program graduates and individuals who had completed all but the dissertation to explore the personal and program experiences that affect dissertation completion and non-completion (Kluever, 1997). Financial problems, changing interests, work and family demands, discontentment with program advising, and personal concerns were cited as reasons for non-completion of the doctorate. Concerning obstacles to completion of the doctorate, one aspect identified was that the dissertation required personal motivation, independence, and self direction, and some referred to the dissertation "as a set of confusing requirements and hurdles to be overcome" (Kluever, 1997, p. 6). Another

obstacle indicated was the transition from passage of doctoral exams to starting to work on an acceptable dissertation proposal. Difficulties were encountered in writing the first page, identifying an acceptable problem for study, and stating the problem in terminology that was clear (Kluever, 1997). Rewriting sections in chapters was frustrating for some and the requirement of multiple drafts of chapters had a negative view (Kluever, 1997). These latter problems outlined above apply to all doctoral students, however, it can be surmised that these frustrations are shared by African-American males. When these problems related to persistence failure are combined with issues of racism and/or white privilege issues mentioned earlier, these add to the many challenges (individual, institutional, and educational) that inhibit their success as graduate students in doctoral study.

Motivation's Impact on Academic Achievement

Still, despite these many obstacles, African-American males do complete the doctorate and the literature suggests that to have some modicum of achievement in the educational arena, motivation is crucial. Motivation appears to be a key element in helping African-American men overcome the obstacles to accomplish their goal—achievement of the doctorate, a point that has found support in the research that suggested that students' motivational orientations might impact their academic behaviors, affect, and cognition in many ways (Dowson & McInerney, 2003). Achievement motivation can be defined as a person's readiness to confront a challenge personally, including behaviors of calculating risks, solving problems, and striving for perfect results, which includes the time perspective (before, during, and after) relative to performing a task (Sagie, 1994).

With regard to adult and higher education, motivation emerges as crucial regarding educational outcomes. Self-determined motivation, as an example, has been "linked to various educational outcomes across the age span, from early elementary school to college students," (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991, p. 331). Students who had more self-determined forms of motivation for doing schoolwork had more likelihood of staying in school than those with less of the motivation, according to some studies (e.g., Daoust, Vallerand & Blais, 1988; Vallerand, 1991; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992).

In one research study of the academic success in African-American doctoral recipients, Adams (1999) explored the effects of psychological and social psychological factors. The psychological factors included attitude (one's confidence regarding his or her ability to accomplish academically), determination (direction or tendency to be focused on earning the doctoral degree), ability (academic aptitude), and motivation (goal for pursuing the doctorate), which were considered internal factors. Correspondingly, the sociological factor included a support system (institutional or social elements from family, friends, institution, or finances that promote the pursuit of the doctorate), which was considered an external factor. This study revealed that if a person possessed strong psychological factors (attitude, determination, ability, and motivation) and strong sociological factors (support system), there was a strong probability of academic success—achievement of the doctorate. If a person possessed strong psychological factors and weak sociological factors and if the reverse were true, that is, there were weak psychological factors and strong sociological factors, there was a possibility of academic

success. Finally, if there were weak psychological factors and weak sociological factors, academic success was unlikely (Adams, 1999).

Turning to African-American men and following from the above, it can be expected that an African-American male might need to possess strong psychological features including being motivated and strong sociological features like a support system in order to achieve a doctorate. Concerning this issue, little is known regarding the precise nature and dynamics of the psychological and sociological features associated with the motivation of African-American men who pursued and completed doctoral studies. This situation suggests the need for research.

Statement of the Problem

African-American males face substantial barriers to their education development (Rovai, et al., 2007). Moreover, African-American males trail African-American women by 35% in doctorates awarded to African Americans (NCES, 2007), a reversal of the trend 32 years ago. Despite these statistics and the associated barriers to doctorate completion at MWIs, some African-American males have achieved the doctorate. Motivation appears to be crucial for individuals to complete the doctorate because of its association with and influence on behavior (Snowman, 2000). It is further important in the educational arena because it contributes to a person's academic success in that arena (Linnebrink & Pintrich, 2002). In the case of African-American males, motivation might play a similar role in their success or failure to achieve the doctorate. However, little knowledge exists regarding the motivation of African-American males in the completion of the doctorate.

Theoretical Framework

The literature review elicited a theoretical framework developed by Ryan and Deci (2000) that showed promise to underpin this problem and suggest possible explanations. Deci and Ryan implemented a research agenda into studying motivation and education from the perspective of a theory they developed entitled, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes making decisions for self (Deci, 1980) and where self-determination was described as "the process of utilizing one's will" (Deci, 1980, p. 26). When applied in the educational arena, the theory supports promoting students' interest in learning, the value of education, and student self-efficacy (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

SDT is a macro-theory of human motivation concerned with the development and functioning of personality within social contexts. The theory focuses on the degree to which human behaviors are self-determined or the degree to which people endorse their actions at the highest level of reflection and engage in the actions with a full sense of choice (Rochester University, 2003). The regulatory process is *choice* when a behavior is self-determined; however, it is *compliance* when it is controlled (Deci et al., 1991). The components of this theory of motivation are defined as follows: 1) Basic Needs Theory—posits three basic psychological needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness; 2) Causality Orientations Theory—proposes that intrinsic motivation is influenced by environmental evaluations and personality orientations; 3) Cognitive Evaluation Theory—accounts for situational factors that influence a person's intrinsic or extrinsic motivational functioning; and 4) Organismic Integration Theory—explains the

different forms of extrinsic motivation and the factors that either encourage or hinder internalization and integration of the regulation for the behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The tenets of the SDT and associated sub-theories (Ryan & Deci, 2000) were considered as a possible model for motivation as it related to the motivation of African-American males who achieved the doctorate. In particular, Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory appeared to be directly related to the purpose of the study, whereas, the other sub-theories appeared to be less relevant.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the issues and experiences related to the motivation of African-American males toward the completion of the doctorate in Majority White Institutions (MWIs). It was anticipated that the tenets of SDT and associated sub-theories of motivation (Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory) would serve as a possible framework for examining the study's findings.

Research Questions

Two research questions arose from the purpose of this study. The first research question was: In light of the research-defined obstacles related to doctoral degree completion, what is the role of motivation in African-American males' completion of the doctorate? The second research question was: Of what relative importance are motivation elements such as intrinsic versus extrinsic, autonomy, competence, relatedness, identified regulation, and/or integrated regulation in the academic achievement of these men? These questions are related to both the Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory.

Definition of Terms

The terms used throughout this study are defined below:

Academic Achievement—An individual who has earned a doctorate will be considered to have reached academic achievement.

Academic Culture—This term is defined in higher education as "the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behaviors of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus" (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 12-13). For the purpose of this study, this term will be used interchangeably with campus environment.

Academic Integration—A measurement in terms of both grades achieved and one's intellectual development during the college years (Tinto, 1975, p. 104). In addition, this integration includes the participation of a student in the intellectual activities of a higher education institution (Tinto, 1987).

African American—An American of African descent (ancestry indigenous to Africa). This term is used interchangeably with Black Americans and/or Blacks.

Attrition—The loss in students by higher education institutions in the normal course of an academic program period (Nagda et al., 1998).

Discrimination—The practice of treating similarly situated individuals differently because of race, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, or national origin (Delgado, 2001, p. 145).

Doctorate—For the purpose of this research study, this term is defined as the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Doctor of Social Work (DSW), or Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.).

Graduate Student—This term refers to a student who is pursuing a master's degree or doctorate.

Historically Black College/University (HBCU)—A land-grant higher education institution originally established for the purpose of educating African-Americans.

Incongruence—Considerable disparity between the student's intellectual orientation and that of the institution. This includes both formal academic activities as well as the result of daily interactions between students, faculty, and staff that transpire outside the classroom setting (Tinto, 1987, p. 116).

Majority White Institution (MWI)—A college or university where the majority of the student population is of Caucasian/European ancestry. For the purpose of this research study, the term MWI will be used interchangeably with Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and Traditionally White Institution (TWI).

Persistence—The result of great involvement or integration in the life of the college on the part of a student (Tinto, 1997). This includes "a person's willingness to work toward the attainment of his/her goals" (Tinto, 1987, p. 44).

Racial Identity Development (RID)—The process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group (Tatum, 1997, p. 16).

Racism—A system of advantage based on race involving cultural messages and, institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals (Tatum, 1997, p. 7).

Retention—For the purpose of this research study, this term refers to a higher education institution that maintains a student's matriculation in the doctoral degree program from start to completion of the doctorate.

Social Integration—Interaction between the individual with given sets of characteristics (backgrounds, values, commitments, etc.) and other persons of varying characteristics within the college. Social integration, as it pertains to persistence in college, implies the development, through friendship associations, of sufficient congruence with some part of the social system of the college (Tinto, 1975, p. 107).

Social Support—The support originating from factors external to the academic culture and not provided by the institution.

Voice—Ability of a group, such as African Americans or women, to articulate experience in ways unique to it (Delgado, 2001, p. 156).

White Privilege—Right or advantage, often unwritten, conferred on some but not others, usually without examination or good reason (Delgado, 2001, p. 153).

Assumptions Underlying the Study

It was assumed that there was a continuing need to improve African-American student success in higher education institutions, especially for African-American men, and that this study would generate findings that might help in that effort. Further, it was assumed that the existing body of knowledge regarding African-American men failed to explore the issues and experiences that motivated these men during doctoral studies.

Finally, it was assumed that the research participants would tell the truth about their experiences and reveal what they confronted and overcame during their doctorate pursuit.

Method

A qualitative approach, also known as Interpretivism, was employed to conduct the study and interpret a breadth of information and perceptions related to motivation that emerged from interviews with 12 African-American males who had completed doctorates at Majority White Institutions (MWIs) in the last 10 years. A "clustering" method for data gathering in research was used at the initial stage of the interview process, while the second phase incorporated a semi-structured interview with probing questions designed to obtain from the research participants a depth of information and insights from which the major themes were drawn. The emergent themes were analyzed with respect to the Deci and Ryan theoretical framework to determine their appropriateness for enlarging the understanding of the research topic. Finally, a second interview was conducted with each research participant to share the major themes identified, to allow each participant to provide feedback regarding the initial findings, and to clarify any information that was vague.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this research inquiry concerned its being confined to the perceptions of African-American men who were motivated to earn the doctorate at several Majority White Institutions (MWIs) in several regions of the country where regional characteristics vary. Second, African-American men who achieved the doctorate at MWIs were likely to reveal different perspectives of a MWI from what they would reveal in the academic culture at an HBCU, Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), or a tribal

college since these institutions were established to affirm students representing specific ethnic cultures and/or to offer the type of support required of their students for academic success. Furthermore, the study did not compare the experiences of African-American men to men in the majority culture or to men of other ethnic backgrounds.

Significance of the Research

It is known that a large contingent of African Americans look to education as a vehicle for upward mobility. However, the literature shows that there is a disproportionate low representation of African-American men in higher education and although some of these men have access to higher education and many have completed doctorates, the rate of African-American males who achieve doctorates continues to be lower. Lesser numbers of African-American male doctoral achievers can reduce the numbers available to serve as role models in professions, role models in leadership roles, and role models available to contribute positively to the society-at-large. Achieving doctorates (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) empowers many African-American males to mentor future generations of students, thereby reducing the likelihood that those individuals would flow into low paying jobs or joblessness and/or undergo incarceration.

It is anticipated that the study's findings will assist higher education institutions in developing strategies for recruiting and retaining African-American males to completion of the doctorate. Furthermore, it is hoped that the findings might provide the impetus to other African-American males to complete doctoral degrees, thereby increasing the number of African-American male doctorate achievers.

Disclosure of Personal Interest

As an African-American woman researcher who has great respect for African-American men, their achievements throughout history, and the obstacles many have overcome in the world throughout the centuries, I empathize with the struggles of African-American men in the educational arena and applaud their achievements. My professional career has been comprised of administrative leadership roles in higher education, hospital administration, and public affairs. During my professional career in higher education at three different Majority White Institutions (MWIs) and at a historically Black college/university (HBCU) in the area of graduate program development, I observed small numbers of African-American men pursuing graduate study, especially the doctorate. During my doctoral studies at a MWI, the African-American men with whom I came in contact seemed to be isolated or sometimes isolated themselves because of the belief that they were experiencing unfair treatment. Many of these men sought help from their African-American or Caucasian women peers. Sometimes, the peers were asked to show examples of how to develop a particular project or analyze textual information. These men were helped in determining whether the scholarly work that they had produced was perceived to be the expectation of the faculty member from the peer's viewpoint. These African-American men seemed to be more comfortable making inquiries with their peers than they did posing questions to the faculty members who taught their classes. In contrast, the Caucasian males in classes engaged the faculty members with questions about assignments or projects as well as networked with other Caucasian men and women peers in and outside of class.

My concern was that obstacles like lack of faculty support, discrimination, and/or white privilege could discourage some African-American men to the degree that they might not complete the doctorate. Furthermore, I was concerned that there were lower numbers of African-American males who were completing college, and of those who completed the bachelor's degree, there seemed to be a decline in those going on to pursue graduate study, including the doctorate. Finally, I had a strong interest in the field of motivation at the doctoral level, which arose from a pilot study I conducted while matriculating through a qualitative research course. The pilot study consisted of a qualitative research investigation using phenomenological research methods with a sample size of three African-American male research participants. The research findings revealed that the research participants were motivated to complete the doctorate due to an intrinsic drive to achieve the degree. After conducting this research, I developed an interest in learning about motivation theories and their application to individuals in pursuit of the doctorate. This research inquiry broadened the understanding of what motivated African-American males to complete the doctorate, and it uncovered strategies that can be used in the future to make easier the journeys of African-American males and other men from multi-cultural backgrounds in doctorate degree pursuit.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to share with the reader the rationale for this research investigation. Chapter two will provide a review of the literature that served as the foundation for this study, and it encompasses the research focused on African-American males in higher education, motivation theories with emphasis on Self-Determination Theory, and other related topics. Chapter three includes the methodology

employed to conduct the research study, chapters four and five reveal the findings of the study, and chapter six provides an analysis of the research findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding of the issues and experiences related to the motivation of African-American males to complete the doctorate in Majority White Institutions (MWIs) with specific focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and such elements as autonomy, competence, relatedness, identified regulation, and/or integrated regulation. This review of the literature is in two parts: the first focuses on African Americans and the higher education context; the second examines the literature on motivation as it relates to academic achievement and considers motivation theories appropriate for examining the research topic. The conclusion of the chapter sets the stage for a discussion of methodology in chapter three.

Part I—African Americans and the Higher Education Context

This literature review opens with a brief overview of education for African Americans in the United States of America (USA), the impact of white privilege on African-American graduate student success, racism and its effects, theories of development for African Americans including Racial Identity Development, and the importance of Critical Race Theory to the research topic. This section also comprises a review of the literature regarding African-American student academic and social integration, student retention, self-efficacy, and persistence strategies.

A brief overview reveals that the USA has progressed from denying the education of African Americans legally, to separate but "equal" educational tracks, on to the passage of desegregation laws, and through a succession of civil rights movements (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). Higher education moved toward desegregation in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, the U. S. Supreme Court's landmark case (Kim, 2002).

However, full ethnic and racial integration in schools, which was the vision noted in this historic case, was hampered by the residential segregation in the United States (Tatum, 2004). It is of note that more than 90% of African-American college graduates were educated by the historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (Kim, 2002). Enrollments at HBCU's decreased, however, as African Americans were able to attend Majority White Institutions (MWIs) (Kim, 2002).

Turning to the present doctoral degree award picture, it appears that the representation of doctoral-prepared African Americans varies across disciplines (Borden, Brown, & Garver, 2005). The changes in doctoral degrees awarded in the last ten years for African Americans in diverse disciplines are printed below.

Ten-Year Changes in Doctoral Degrees by Disciplines for African Americans

Discipline	***Number of Degrees Conferred***	
	1995-1996	***2005-2006***
Agriculture and natural resources	23	33
Architecture and related services	5	3
Area, ethnic, cultural, and gender studies	22	44
Biological and biomedical sciences	79	175
Business	45	137
Communications, journalism, and related programs	19	24
Communications technologies	1	0
Computer and information sciences	10	24
Construction trades	0	0
Education	564	1,093
Engineering	74	116
Engineering technologies	0	5
English language and literature/letters	50	67
Family and consumer sciences	0	33
Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics	8	18
Health professions and related clinical sciences	64	356
Legal professions and studies	2	5
Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities	6	2
Library science	2	2
Mathematics and statistics	9	21

Mechanics and repair technologies	0	0
Military technologies	0	0
Multi-interdisciplinary studies	38	43
Parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies	7	10
Philosophy and religious studies	15	41
Physical sciences and science technologies	56	63
Precision production	0	0
Psychology	159	315
Public administration and social service professions	44	106
Security and protective services	0	7
Social sciences and history	121	182
Theology and religious vocations	147	171
Transportation and materials moving	0	0
Visual and performing arts	31	26
All Fields, Total	1,636	3,122

(NCES, 2007).

Of particular note, the number of African Americans earning doctorates during the 1996-2006 decade increased dramatically in the Health Professions by 18%, Business by 33%, and Education by 55% (NCES, 2007). However, in spite of the progress that was made, these doctoral increases still lag behind the African-American population rate (13%) in the USA. The highest representation (19.2%) lies in the field of Education and Health Professions, which still warrants improvement.

African Americans and High School Graduation and Equivalent Achievement

A look at the current projections with respect to high school graduates overall shows that during Academic Year 2007-2008, about 3,303,000 high school students were expected to graduate receiving high school diplomas, which exceeded the former records of 2006-2007 and 2005-2006. This amount includes 2,988,000 public school graduates and 315,000 private school graduates (NCES, 2007). With regard to the high school graduation rates in 2004-2005, there were 2,789,447 high school graduates and of this amount, 1,851,023 (66%) were white and 384,681 (14%) were African-American with

the remaining 553,783 (20%) divided among Hispanic (14%), Asian/Pacific Islander (5%), and American Indians/Alaska Natives (1%). The rate of African Americans completing advanced degrees declined as African Americans continued education pursuits as noted in the paragraphs ahead.

African Americans and Postsecondary Education Achievement

In order for larger numbers of African-Americans and specifically, African-American males, to be in the college pipeline for them to advance to the master's degree and doctoral degree levels, these males must graduate from high school or obtain the high school diploma equivalent documentation. Of the 1,485,242 bachelor's degrees earned, 142,420 (9.6%) were earned by African-Americans and of the 594,065 master's degrees earned, 58,976 (9.9%) were earned by African-Americans while of the total 56,067 doctoral degrees earned, 3,122 (5.6%) were earned by African-Americans for the 2005-2006 academic year (NCES, 2007). Although the percentage of African Americans who completed the master's degree increased slightly from the bachelor's degree, there was a great drop in those African Americans' completion of the doctorate. The percentages clearly indicate that after African-Americans graduated from high school, there was a great decrease in achievement at the doctoral level. Specifically, with regard to African-American men, of the 630,600 men who had the bachelor's degree conferred for the 2005-2006 academic year, 48,079 (7.6%) were African-American men and of the 237,896 men who had the master's degrees conferred in the same period, 16,959 (7.1%) were African-American men while of the 28,634 men who had doctoral degrees conferred in the same period, 1,081 (3.8%) were African-American men. These percentages show, for the target population of this study, that after African-American

men graduate from high school, there is a continued decline in the number of African-American men who complete the bachelor's, master's, and terminal degrees.

The Impact of White Privilege

Although many African Americans now attend MWIs, they find themselves in the arena of white privilege, which has been described as an institutional set of benefits granted to individuals who, based upon their ethnic group, resemble the populace that dominates the authoritative positions in those institutions (Kendall, 2001). This dominant group has as one of its primary privileges more access to resources and control than people of color strictly due to their skin color (Kendall, 2001). Dominant groups (usually identified as whites in the United States) "set the parameters within which subordinates operate. The dominant group holds the power and the authority in society relative to the subordinates and determines how that power and authority may be acceptably used" (Tatum, 1997, p. 23).

"White privilege is like an invisible, weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" observed McIntosh, (1988, p. 207). Instances of a systematic structure granting privileges to whites and withholding those same privileges from others are prevalent throughout history, some examples being their relocating Native Americans from their land and removing their children from their homes, treating Black people as property by holding them as slaves and separating Black families during slavery, passing laws to maintain the legal separation and inequality of whites and African Americans, manipulating immigration laws to lessen the number of immigrants—Chinese, Mexican, and European Jews—who were people of color, removing Americans of Japanese origin from their homes during

World War II as well as taking their land and businesses and assuming ownership, and promoting opportunities for white women more willingly than people of color through affirmative action (Kendall, 2001). White privilege has translated into white people making decisions that affect all people without taking all people into account (Kendall, 2001). In many instances, whites were known to ignore the voices of people of other races or tolerate from a cultural basis the hearing or acting of the voices (McIntosh, 1988). In addition, white privilege distinguishes white people as normal and other people as sub-standard (Kendall, 2001) and "white privilege allows us not to see race in ourselves and to be angry at those who do" (Kendall, 2001, p. 6).

White privilege "simply confers dominance, gives permission to control, because of one's race or sex" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 77). The power that is gained from unearned privilege can give the impression of strength, when in essence, it is consent to flee or to be in command (McIntosh, 1988). White privilege, which has been viewed as the standard for which other people have been educated and evaluated, is "compatible with an educational philosophy that emphasizes meritocracy, individualism, and rational, linear thinking" (Manglitz, 2003, p. 127). An instance in which this might occur concerns white privilege at the graduate level, manifesting itself in how a doctoral committee works with a doctoral student of color. Likewise, a doctoral student of color might experience a more difficult time gaining access to a doctoral committee chair or other faculty member on the doctoral committee for the purpose of mentoring through the doctoral program process, or might be unable to gain privy to informal settings where faculty members and other peers gather and discuss issues affecting them with regard to

their doctoral studies. One can surmise that African Americans pursuing doctorates in MWIs probably encounter white privilege whether they wish to do so or not.

Racism and its Effects

In concert with white privilege and at the core of racial problems in America are the frequent negative experiences of middle-class African Americans with whites who discriminate (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). “Middle class African Americans are the group within black America that, generally speaking, had the most recent experience with whites across the broadest array of social situations. They are often the ones who are desegregating historically white arenas and institutions, including upscale restaurants and department stores, business enterprises, corporate and government workplaces, white colleges, and white neighborhoods” (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 26). Racism, both institutional and personal, exists on college and university campuses, and the problem is enhanced further for African Americans by a lack of role models who are African American (Harris, 1996). Elaborating on racism, Feagin and Sikes (1994) offered four relevant propositions, the first of which was that racism in these times can be understood as “lived experience,” which refers to those daily experiences that encompass oppressive encounters of individuals like African Americans as they pass through conventionally white places and the oppressed individual’s interpretation of the experiences. Secondly, severe discriminatory experiences are excruciating and traumatic in the immediate circumstances and after effects, and can turn out to be a collective blow on specific individuals, their families, and their communities. Thirdly, repeated racist experiences affect considerably a black person’s conduct and understanding of life and the social world, and lastly, that the daily racial hostility and discriminatory experiences that

middle-class and other African Americans encounter are the basics of “the interlocking societal structures and processes called ‘institutionalized racism.’”

Theories that Focus on African-American Adult Development

A turn to look at theories focused on African Americans might contribute to gaining a perspective regarding how an African-American male’s development might affect his behavior in completing the doctorate. First explored were Black adult development theories that address the psychosocial factors related to the development of African Americans and acknowledge the cultural-race aspect of development (Littleton, 1998). Most African-American adult development literature focused on racial awareness or racial identity development, career choices and decidedness, academic development, and social development, according to Cheatham et al., (1990), which, in turn, provided a means for studying the development of African-American adult students (Littleton, 1998). Crawley and Freeman (1993) developed a theory that was based on enhanced psychosocial concepts, bicultural factors, and the Afro centric paradigm, which gave a more holistic, healthy perspective for understanding African-American aspirations, strengths, and potential (Littleton, 1998). These theories were reviewed because it was thought that they might serve as a basis for understanding the personal motivation of African-American males in doctoral study.

In tandem with the Black adult development theories, the more general developmental stage theories were reviewed for their possibility of helping to explain the behavior of African-American men at various stages of development. A developmental approach of studying adulthood was detailed by Daniel Levinson (Levinson, D.J., Darrow, C.N., Klein, E.B., Levinson, M.H., & McKee, B., 1978) who provided a concept

of the life cycle as a whole and focused in on development in early and middle adulthood, identifying four sequences as follows: childhood and adolescence (age 0-22), early adulthood (17-45), middle adulthood (40-65), and late adulthood (60+) (Levinson et al., 1978). Levinson stipulated that the sequential periods overlap allowing a new period to start while the previous one ends.

Littleton drew upon and integrated the contributions of Herbert, Jones, and Bowman, respectively, regarding developmental stages of African Americans. To begin with, Littleton focused on Herbert's work (1989) that had built on the theory of Levinson et al. (1978). Herbert had added two interdependent development tasks as follows: (1) the formation of an explicitly individual racial identity that acknowledged and freed the individual of racism and prejudices, and (2) the formation of an individual self-concept dedicated to the eradication and abolition of racism (Littleton, 1998). Littleton suggested that Herbert's theory was found to be appropriate for defining African-American psychosocial development (Littleton, 1998). Occupation, marriage, family, and dreams, which were considered developmental issues, were examined and found relevant (Littleton, 1998).

Furthermore, Littleton focused on Jones' (1996) work, which dealt with an Afro centric theoretical perspective that could be implemented when conceptualizing adult psychosocial development and positive racial/ethnic identity development (Littleton, 1998). Jones had concluded that positive racial/ethnic identity was initially stimulated by early childhood psychosocial factors like the family, community, and school, and that this identity would continue to develop throughout later life as a result of ensuing psychosocial experiences. If disparities surfaced between positive, negative and

ambiguous attributes, they had to be resolved in order to develop a positive proactive identity (Littleton, 1998). Part of the problem seemed to be that negative forces might have adversely affected the identity of many African-American men, and in the absence of a positive self-identity the outcome could have been failure to attend or dropping out of school. Obviously, if one failed to attend school in the earlier stages of development, the chances of pursuing higher education, and at the extreme—a doctorate, were going to be slim to none.

Littleton also worked with Bowman's (1989) research and concluded that men of all cultures progressed through four sequential stages of adult development (Pre-Adult Years/Identity, Early Adulthood/ Intimacy, Middle Adulthood/Generativity, and Old Age/Ego-Identity), found in examining the effects of racism on the adult development of African-American males, that as these men moved from adolescence to old age, a succession of conflicts in major life roles caused various psychosocial development disturbances (Littleton, 1998). Littleton concurred with Bowman's view that each psychosocial problem that arose in each phase had to be resolved for development to advance (Littleton, 1998).

Thus, in this research study, the researcher was able to look at the developmental stage for which an African-American male found himself at the time of pursuing a doctorate and to consider how it might have helped shape how the male responded in diverse situations during the doctoral study period. Concurrently, the African-American male's development with regard to racial identity was thought to also contribute to his actions.

Racial Identity Development

The Racial Identity Development (RID) model referred to as the psychology of nigrescence (the psychology of becoming Black) was developed by William Cross (1971), a psychologist and author of Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity. RID can be described as the process of identifying one's own racial group as a viable self-reference group. Cross' Nigrescence Model for African-American RID reveals five developmental stages including Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment (Cross, 1971 & Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001). The term, nigrescence, refers to stages or identities (Worrell, et al., 2001). "Nigrescence Theory predicts qualitative differences in behavior over time," (Worrell, et al., 2001).

To enlarge our understanding of the principles of RID, Tatum (1997) described the instance of the Black child who takes in various values and beliefs of the White culture considered to be the dominant culture, "including the idea that it is better to be White" in the pre-encounter stage (Tatum, 1997, p. 55). The significance of a person's racial group membership whether personal or social is not realized at this stage (Tatum, 1997). In the second stage, the encounter stage, usually an event or events "force a young person to acknowledge the personal impact of racism" (Tatum, 1997, p. 55). A person's RID might start as early as junior high school, according to Tatum (1997). "The developmental need to explore the meaning of one's identity with others who are engaged in a similar process manifests itself informally in school corridors and cafeterias across the country" (Tatum, 1997, p. 71). In the third phase (immersion/ emersion), the Black person is eager to learn fresh information like learning that "there is more to Black

history than victimization" (Tatum, 1997, p. 76). This stage is characterized by questioning internalized stereotypes about one's own group and redefining a positive self image based on affirming one's racial group identity (Tatum, 1997). In the next phase, internalization, the Black person experiences security with their own identity and establishes relationships with other races who respect the person's "new self-definition" (Tatum, 1997, p. 76). The last stage, internalization-commitment, is characterized by the individual finding ways to express a commitment to concerns of African Americans as a group (Tatum, 1997). Individuals at either the fourth or fifth stages are "anchored in a positive sense of racial identity" and are "prepared to perceive and transcend race" (Tatum, 1997, p. 76). The chart (below) shows Cross's Nigrescence Stages and Identities (Worrell, et al., 2001).

1971 Original Model	
Stage	*Identity*
Pre-Encounter	Pro-White/Anti-Black
Encounter	
Immersion-Emersion	Anti-White/Pro-Black
Internalization	Humanist
Internalization-Commitment	
1991 Revised Model	
Stage	*Identity*
Pre-Encounter	Assimilation/Anti-Black
Encounter	
Immersion-Emersion	Anti-White/Intense Black Involvement
Internalization	Black Nationalist/Biculturalist/Multiculturalist
Internalization-Commitment	

2000 Expanded Model	
Stage	*Identity*
Pre-Encounter	Assimilation/Miseducation/Self-Hatred
Encounter	
Immersion-Emersion	Anti-White/Intense Black Involvement
Internalization	Black Nationalist/Biculturalist/Multiculturalist Racial/Multiculturalist Inclusive
Internalization-Commitment	

(Worrell, et al., 2001).

In summary, if psychosocial problems are not addressed for masses of African-American males, as the literature seemed to suggest, the adverse outcomes that are so prevalent in our society ultimately will prevent or at best, hamper the ability of many African-American men from obtaining a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate. What is known now is that African-American men need affirmation of their self-esteem in the early childhood development stages, motivation to complete educational pursuits at all levels of higher education, and support in their educational quest.

Critical Race Theory

Literature on Critical Race Theory (CRT), a contributing perspective for this research investigation, focuses on the transformation of the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT considers, as does conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses, many similar issues, but it places them in a broader context that includes "economics, history, context, group-interest and self-interest," "feelings and the unconscious" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3). CRT, in its activist aspect, seeks to address the social situation and change it, focuses on how the

world organizes itself along matters of race and chain of command, and focuses on how to change it for the better (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CRT takes its origin, in part, in opposition to Critical Legal Studies (CLS), for which the focus is "to explore the manner in which legal doctrine and legal education and the practices of legal institutions work to buttress and support a pervasive system of oppressive, inegalitarian relations" (Gates, 1997, p. 745-746). Both CRT and CLS share the word, "critical," in that the two exercise internal critique. CLS accounts targeted subtle "dimensions such as who gets to decide what counts as a dispute and who does not, what kinds of moves are available within a legal framework, and what kinds of moves are considered impermissible," (Gates, 1997, p. 746). CRT's interpretation is that legal doctrine is contradictory and that rules of law are indeterminate—the idea that there is not one correct outcome for each legal case (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and further, that the legal institutions' operations are "systematically biased in favor of economically and socially privileged elites" (Gates, 1997, p. 746). CRT exercises critique, both conceptually and doctrinally, in its endeavor to get to the root of legal doctrine, contrasting with the reformist twist of customary civil rights scholarship (Gates, 1997). CRT also embraces feminist thought regarding the relationship between power and social role construction, and the patterns and habits (visible and invisible) that comprise patriarchy and other domination types (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CRT theorists like Derrick Bell and Patricia Williams derive much of their CRT framework from historical perspectives including slave narratives and accounts of enslaved African Americans who described their circumstance (Gates, 1997). Initially, Bell used African-American slavery as a model for others, observing that slaves had no

escape and that they carved out humanity for themselves by continuing to engage themselves. Bell now urges those who are anti-racists "to struggle against racism in order to make their lives meaningful rather than in the hope of someday magically sweeping racism away" (Gates, 1997, p. 784). European philosophers, Antonio Gramsci and Jacques Derrida, as well as American activists who espoused radical change, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. DuBois, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., also inform the tenets of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The research by CRT scholars revealed that "persons in power designed laws and policies that were supposed to be race-neutral but still perpetuated racial and ethnic oppression" (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 22). In response, "critical race theorists built on everyday experiences with perspective, viewpoint, and the power of stories and persuasion to come to a better understanding of how Americans see race" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, Pg. 38). Most critical race theorists agree on the following propositions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). First, most people of color in the United States experience racism as part of their everyday experience. Secondly, the "white-over-color" dominant system serves important purposes and is difficult to address (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). "Because racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). Thirdly, "race and races are products of social thought and relations" and that "races are categories that society invests, manipulates, or retires when convenient" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). The final theme holds that because of ethnic groups' different histories and oppressive experiences,

individuals from these groups might be able to convey to their white counterparts, matters that these counterparts are doubtful to know.

Racism and white privilege were identified as representing some aspects of the challenges that the African-American men in this study might face. CRT was believed to possibly offer explanations for how the respective doctoral programs were organized along matters of race and how to change the programs to make the settings better support the efforts of African-American doctoral students.

Academic Integration and Social Integration

Social and academic development in college can be predicted by student involvement (Flowers & Pascarella, 2003). With respect to the progress from an undergraduate focus to a graduate-level focus, it has been discovered that the ultimate decision to enroll in graduate school stemmed from the academic and social integration within the undergraduate setting (Ethington & Smart, 1986). In light of this, recommendations to improve retention have focused on institutional practices that lead to increased academic integration, increased social integration, and programs that might assist students in their successful rights of passage (Bean & Eaton, 2001). Turning to the doctoral level, completion of the doctorate was found to be related to student interactions in the colleges and universities of which they were a part (Kahn & Nauta, 2001). In addition, it was found that the quality of the relationship between a doctoral student and the student's advisor or faculty member had a positive relationship in the completion of the doctorate (Kahn & Nauta, 2001).

African-American students at MWIs are more likely to experience a disconnection between becoming academically integrated into the institution and their

high aspirations, and when African Americans fail to integrate socially, their response to their educational involvement can result in their dropping out of higher education entirely (Kahn & Nauta, 2001). It can be concluded that for African-American students to move from the undergraduate level to the graduate level to the doctoral level, integrating academically and socially in the higher education institution at all levels is imperative.

The literature showed that from 1994 to 2004, the change in percentage of African Americans earning doctoral degrees increased by 2.5%, for Hispanics by 1.2%, for Asian Americans by 0.5%, and for American Indians by 0.1% (Borden, et al., 2005). In a MWI, diversity was considered to be an asset and although the increases during the decade were slim, the increase represented a positive direction. Pascarella (2001) observed that there was a link between a diverse student body in a higher education institution and the possibility of a student's engaging in experiences like interacting with peers of multiple national origins, races, cultures, values, and political orientations, as well as taking classes that focused on issues of culture, race, or gender. Thus, diversity might contribute to African Americans integrating academically and socially in MWIs, which might help African Americans in their quest to get undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees.

Student Retention

This section addresses student retention strategies, which are those tactics that higher education institutions use to help students persist in their academic endeavors. Among these strategies, collaborative learning, student involvement, academic achievement, participation in learning communities and peer mentoring are understood to contribute to student persistence. Tinto suggested that the opportunity for collaborative learning helps students to persist (Tinto & Goodsell-Love, 1993). When students

participate in a collaborative learning group, they develop small supportive communities of peers who help them bond to a larger social community of the college while engaging them more in the academic life of the institution. When a setting provides sources of learning coming from many perspectives beyond that offered by one faculty member, students benefit.

In addition to the aforementioned, Walters (1997) found in a study that identified factors affecting retention of minority students in graduate and professional science degree programs that minority students believed it to be important to have positive relationships with peers and faculty. Likewise, Nettles (1990) examined differences in educational experiences and performance of White, Black, and Hispanic graduate students in which the study found some similarities among the students surveyed. Racial group differences were more significant. For example, it was found that Black students came from the poorest socioeconomic backgrounds, had attended less selective undergraduate institutions, were less likely to major in science at the undergraduate level, and felt more strongly than Whites that mentors were supportive (Nettles, 1990). The Nettles research study revealed retention strategies that were expected to help other African-American men to complete the doctorate in the future.

Self-efficacy

Of significance and in concert with institution retention strategies, self-efficacy also has been identified as a possible positive influence for African Americans (Nagda, Gregerman, Jonides, von Hippel, & Lerner, 1998). Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's perception of his or her ability to act in a certain way to assure certain outcomes (Nagda, et al., 1998). When individuals believe they are competent, they gain

in self-confidence, develop higher levels of persistence and achievement of the task, and develop higher goals for task achievement (Nagda, et al., 1998). Furthermore, they develop a sense of their effectiveness in dealing with specific tasks or situations based on observation and past experiences. However, it is important to note that an individual's belief does not transfer to another area, like being capable in the area of math and transferring the belief to the area of dance. Self-efficacy is task specific (Nagda, et al., 1998).

In summary, the literature reviewed to this point in the sections on African-American student retention and self-efficacy point to four major conclusions: (1) to be successful in the college environment, students must be persistent in their educational pursuits; (2) to be persistent requires academic integration and social integration in the higher education institution; (3) effective student retention strategies include collaborative learning, student involvement, academic achievement, participation in learning communities, and peer mentoring; and (4) when individuals believe they are competent, they will develop high goals for achievement. The conclusions in this section refer to undergraduate students and graduate students. In the next section on persistence, however, the conclusions refer to graduate and terminal degree students.

Persistence

Attention will be directed toward persistence, a second feature of success in graduate school. When a student gets involved or integrated into the life of a higher education institution and is willing to work toward the attainment of a goal until the goal is reached, the student is viewed as having persisted (Tinto, 1997, 1987). Given the focus of this research study on the motivation of African-American males to achieve the

doctorate, this concept implies that persistence would need to occur in order for the academic achievement to have occurred. Thus, an African-American male doctoral student whose self-efficacy is maximized might be expected to achieve the doctorate. This section addresses persistence and attempts to gleam some understanding of the elements that contribute to it.

In studying the factors influencing persistence and non-persistence of Black and Hispanic doctoral students at the graduate entry level, along with institutional practices that affect minority participation in graduate education regarding the retention of Black and Hispanic doctoral students, Clevell (1987) found that the level of support for minority students varied greatly among colleges. Characteristics and experiences of those who persisted to completion of doctorates included individuals with high achievement in high school, supportive advisers, participation in professional activities during graduate school, and a desire for knowledge. Efforts that seemed to encourage minority student participation included an institution-wide policy regarding minority graduate students, coordination of services for minority students by a unit above the departmental level, special admissions arrangements, and support services focused on minority students' needs (Clevell, 1987). Other positive aspects to help doctoral students persist included being satisfied with their academic program, peer interaction, and financial support by the institution (Kahn & Nauta, 2001).

Review of the research of the early 1990s on African-American graduate students' persistence revealed, contrary to earlier findings, that "traditional factors used to predict white students' persistence are invalid for predicting African-American graduate students' success" (Faison, 1993, p. 2). Faison identified reasons for a lack of

participation among African-American students in mentoring relationships like the racial makeup of available mentors in higher education, the cultural and interactional differences that exist between African-American students and the predominantly white faculty, and the difficulty in overcoming the financial strain of pursuing a graduate degree.

Assessing the persistence of African Americans is incomplete, however, without discussing college attrition factors. Since attrition refers to the loss in individuals by an organization in the normal course of events, it can be suggested that college attrition refers to the loss in students of a higher education institution in the normal course of an academic program period. College attrition is higher for African Americans (45%) than other ethnic groups (Nagda, et al., 1998). In addition, attrition causes exist outside academic causes, according to Tinto (1987) and many times these causes are more significant reasons in dropout than the academic causes (Sherman, Giles, & Williams-Green, 1994). Tinto's (1993) model of attrition identifies factors that can predict attrition in two categories as follows: assumption that students who failed to graduate were under prepared for college work when they entered college, and the assumption that varying structural factors in educational institutions fail to support specific students, which leads to attrition significantly (Nagda, et al., 1998). Furthermore, lack of integration of students within an institution is a crucial factor in contributing to student departure (Nagda, et al., 1998).

Part II—Motivation and Motivation Theories

The second part of this chapter examines the existing research on motivation that is relevant to the research problem; it includes a review of the literature on motivation as

it relates to academic achievement and motivation theories appropriate for examining the research topic. This section opens by defining motivation, revealing the contested nature of motivation, and discussing motivation and related behavior. The chapter closes with a description of two theories of motivation and an overview of each.

Motivation Defined

The term, "motivation," can be variously defined based on how it is used, the context in which it is used, and/or its cultural or cross-cultural context. In general, motivation encompasses intrinsic and/or extrinsic features (Deci (1972) and distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic by considering motivation to be intrinsic when it is *inherent* and extrinsic when it is *extraneous*. It is noteworthy to mention that Deci and Ryan's definitions of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, used in this study, are more complex and different from the "lay" person's viewpoint.

Intrinsic motivation has been defined as the performance of an activity with no expectation of a reward except the direct satisfaction of the activity itself (Deci, 1971). Verbal reinforcements might enhance a person's intrinsic motivation on performing a task; however, a punishment threat of poor performance might undermine it (Deci, 1972). "Intrinsic motivation will be enhanced when situational factors (such as the absence of constraints and the presence of choice) induce a change in perceived locus of causality from external to internal (with the accompanying increase in feelings of self determination) or when positive feedback induces the perceptions of competence (with the accompanying increase in feelings of competence)" (Deci, 1980, p. 37). "Intrinsic motivation will be undermined when extrinsic factors induce a change in perceived locus of causality from internal to external (with the accompanying decrease in feelings of self-

determination) or when negative feedback induces a perception of incompetence (with the accompanying decrease in feelings of competence)" (Deci, 1980, p. 37). People choose the activities they engage in as well as how to carry out those activities when they are motivated intrinsically (Boggiano & Pittman, 1992).

In contrast to the above, rewards like praise, money, or punishment avoidance for doing an activity is considered extrinsic motivation (Deci, 1980). It has been found that extrinsic rewards decrease the intrinsic motivation of subjects when financial rewards or an aversive stimulus used as a reward is avoided (Deci, 1980). Researchers have concluded that most reward structures are more evaluative and controlling (Boggiano & Pittman, 1992).

Contested Nature of the Term

A review of the literature is this section was conducted for the purpose of determining how the term, "motivation," was analyzed in various fields and to provide insight into the motivation of African-American males who had completed the doctorate. The term, "motivation" was identified as having diverse connotations depending on its use in varying fields of study. For example, in the sport and participation context, motivation was defined as a process in which an individual could take the combination of the individual's time, talent, and energy, to distribute those resources in a way chosen by the individual (Bartle & Malkin, 2000). Some people are motivated to participate in sports for intrinsic reasons with the inner drive to achieve a goal and others are motivated to participate for extrinsic reasons to get compensated, win social approval, or rewards (Bartle & Malkin, 2000). In a study of intrinsic motivation and physical activity of two

groups, sport-based competitiveness was positively correlated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Frederick-Recascino & Schuster-Smith, 2003).

A more in depth view of motivation in sports is from the angle of one's motive for participation. Sport and participation motivation was measured in a study of the differences of motivation and actual participation due to gender type (Koivula, 1999). The study found that men and women participate in different types of physical activities because they have different motives for participation (Koivula, 1999). In a study of Special Olympics athletes, it was concluded that the motive behind male athletes' participation was for achievement while the motivation of women athletes' participation was for social orientation (Shapiro, 2003). In this same article, motivation was studied by measuring the motives for participation of people from diverse racial backgrounds. It was found that African-American athletes were motivated to participate in sports first, to play with other team members, and second, to win ribbons, and/or medals, while for Caucasian athletes, just the opposite was true (Shapiro, 2003). Furthermore, older and younger adults were motivated to participate in Special Olympics for the same top three reasons, which included winning ribbons and medals, playing with other team members, and to get exercise (Shapiro, 2003). Moreover, a study using motivation and team identification to predict sport fans' emotional responses to team performance found that motivation was a crucial predictor of post-game positive affect (Wann, Royalty, & Rochelle, 2002).

Another way that the term, "motivation," was analyzed was from the standpoint of what it took to motivate people to work. People must agree that getting something done in a specific way is crucial in order for them to be motivated and these people must

be given non-threatening periodic feedback whether they do an excellent job or fail to meet a supervisor's expectations (McManus, 2003). To illustrate this, managers sitting down with their employees and asking them what they want is an effective approach for them to motivate their workers, according to Donald Fletcher, president of George S. May (USA Today Magazine, 1997). Employers listed advancement opportunities as the top non-financial motivator (17.1%), followed by recognition (15.5) next. In short, people are motivated differently and one reward won't fit each person. In the work place, managers recognize team success when high-performance teams are built, by acknowledging the success of each member of the team (Nelson, 1997). However, giving equal recognition for unequal performance, sometimes referred to as jelly bean motivation, can be a detriment to a team's sustained productivity (Nelson, 1977).

Analyzing the term, "motivation," also can be accomplished through a cognitive device of motivation and self-directedness, according to Bandura (1991), which is one's capacity to exercise an influence on self by challenging one's self and evaluating one's own attainments (Burr & Cordery, 2001). According to this study of self-management efficacy as a mediator of the relation between job design and employee motivation, "perceived control over one's own performance brought about by increased self-regulatory opportunities within one's work should give rise to enhanced self-management efficacy beliefs (thereby increasing work motivation), whereas lack of control is associated with lowered self-management efficacy beliefs and reduced motivation (Burr & Cordery, 2001, p. 2).

Furthermore, analyzing motivation in the field of religion provided a different perspective. In a study of pastoral motivation, it was found that a pastor's motivation is

altruistic—driven predominantly by caring or showing concern for the well-being of others (Zondag, 2000). In this realm, motivation was referred to as expectancy in which it can be surmised that one will do something because one expects that it will lead to goals the person considers to be valuable. To shed insight regarding this type of motivation, much of the theoretical and empirical research on motivation for religious behavior has been based upon Allport's (1959) contention that motivation basically comprises an intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy (Lazar et al., 2002). In this context, motivation is defined as the factors accounting for a person's persistence in the pursuit of opportunities to engage in religious experiences and behavior (Lazar et al.., 2002). Patterns of religious motivation for individuals who belong to diverse religions, like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism may differ (Lazar et al., 2002). Motivation has been redefined as intrinsic commitment for one's religious beliefs, no matter what the religion might be (Gorsuch, 1994). "Being committed to one's own religion on intrinsic grounds would be considerably different for a follower of the Hindu god of Kali than commitment to the Christian God of Martin Luther King, Jr." (Gorsuch, 1994, p. 2). Intrinsic religious commitment can be defined as motivation, and can be broken into two parts—affect (the liking or disliking of a person) and moral value (one's self-perceived moral obligation) (Gorsuch, 1994). "Intrinsic commitment by either affect or value means that the relevant belief or behavior is believed or carried out for its own sake and not as a means to other ends. Affect is often intrinsic" (Gorsuch, 1994, p. 3).

Motivation and Related Behavior

Turning to the topic of motivation and related behavior, a person's viewpoint can help determine how motivation influences behavior depending upon whether the

viewpoint is from a behavioral, cognitive, or humanistic perspective (Snowman, 2000). The behavioral view of motivation posits that desired behavior should be reinforced. Accordingly, intrinsic motivation occurs when a learner, for example, does something to experience inherently satisfying results while extrinsic motivation occurs when a learner does something to earn external rewards (Deci et al., 1991). This view posits that the use of external rewards excessively might lead to temporary behavior change, materialistic attitudes, and decreased intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation can be undermined if rewards are always given when performance is high, rewards are given in advance, or the quality of the performance is ignored. Intrinsic motivation is enhanced when a reward is given for a person's level of skill or a predetermined standard.

Another view, the cognitive view of motivation, embraces the concept of equilibration—a person's inherent desire to achieve a sense of organization and balance in their conception of the world. In this view, a need for achievement is revealed by the desire to attain goals that require skilled performance. Achievers with high needs prefer moderately challenging tasks and those with low needs prefer easy or very hard tasks. Students who are successful in their studies attribute it to effort, ability, and failure to lack of effort, while those who are unsuccessful attribute it to luck, easy tasks, and failure to lack of ability (Snowman, J., 2000).

Finally, motivation from the humanistic standpoint can be explained using Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which ranges in ascending order from physiological needs to self actualization (Snowman, 2000). A person is motivated to satisfy deficiency needs, the first four needs, when those needs are not met. Thus, motivation decreases as deficiency needs are met including physiological needs (e.g.,

food, water, oxygen) safety needs (e.g., nurturance, money), belongingness and love needs (e.g., acceptance, affection), and esteem (e.g., respect). However, motivation increases as being (growth) needs are met, including the need to know and understand, aesthetic needs, and self-actualization needs (e.g., maximizing one's potential). Self-actualization, which is often called a growth need because people strive to satisfy it, depends on the satisfaction of needs at lower levels and a belief in certain values (Snowman, 2000, p. 379).

Following from the above, human beings act based on intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, or both. For example, children who are motivated intrinsically, seemingly learn better than those children who are motivated extrinsically (Deci & Ryan, 1982). Children have a more difficult time sustaining activity that is motivated from outside them, however, when the motivation is from within, children are involved more in their own development and learning (National Association of School Psychologists, 2003). For adolescents, their perception of the expectations and support of teachers influences the adolescents' motivation to achieve, according to a study of the factors affecting the achievement motivation of high school students in Maine (Maya, 2003). It also was found that the expectations and support of parents of their children influence strongly a student's motivation to achieve (Maya, 2003). Students need cognitive skills and the motivational will to perform well in school (Linnebrink, E. & Pintrich, P., 2002). Thus, these two factors contribute to student academic success (Linnebrink & Pintrich, 2002).

"'The problem for motivation,' says deCharms and Muir in their 1978 review of motivational psychology (p. 93), 'is to understand the determinants of change in the

stream of action, not to find what drives/impel specific behaviors'" (Cross, 1981). Cross, another theorist, analyzed various theories in search of developing a model of adult motivation for learning. Cross' Chain-of-Response (COR) Model applies to motivation in that it "assumes that participation in a learning activity, whether in organized classes or self-directed, is not a single act but the result of a chain of responses, each based on an evaluation of the position of the individual in his or her environment" (Cross, 1981, p. 125). It was surmised that African-American males approach and participate in doctoral learning activities based upon a series of educational experiences engaged in prior to doctoral study and that these men achieve depending on their stage in development in their academic culture.

Motivation Theories

A review of the literature was conducted, which yielded two theories to be considered as possible frameworks for the study. The first theory reviewed was Choice Theory (CT) and the second theory reviewed was Self-Determination Theory. The paragraphs below provide details regarding the elements of each of the theories.

Choice Theory (CT)

The CT model (Glasser, 1997) posits that behavior is the core to human existence and is driven by five genetically driven needs including: (1) Survival (food, clothing, shelter, breathing, personal safety, and others); (2) Belonging/connecting/love; (3) Power; (4) Freedom; and (5) Fun. The last four are considered fundamental psychological needs, which are embedded in the genes of people—the need for belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1996). At the core of CT is the existence of a "Quality World" for which human beings place those things that are highly valued as the focus, like the people

who are important, things highly valued, and systems of belief (i.e., religion, cultural values, etc.)

Choice Theory has ten axioms as follows:

1. The only person whose behavior we can control is our own.
2. All we can give another person is information.
3. All long-lasting psychological problems are relationship problems.
4. The problem relationship is always part of our present life.
5. What happened in the past has everything to do with what we are today, but we can only satisfy our basic needs right now and plan to continue satisfying them in the future.
6. We can only satisfy our needs by satisfying the pictures in our Quality World.
7. All we do is behave.
8. All behavior is Total Behavior and is made up of four components: acting, thinking, feeling, and physiology.
9. All Total Behavior is chosen, but we only have direct control over the acting and thinking components. We can only control our feeling and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think.
10. All Total Behavior is designated by verbs and named by the part that is the most recognizable.

An illustration of CT is that of an individual who is not required to answer a phone just because it rings, but because answering the phone is the most satisfying choice for a person at the time the phone rings. In this example, CT is interpreted to mean that the phone ringing is only information, not a stimulus to take action and that information,

alone, does not make an individual take action. CT posits that the more people know about why they are behaving the way they behave, the better they will behave (Glasser, 1996). The principles of CT can be identified more with intrinsic motivation. CT was developed by Dr. William Glasser, a medical doctor, whose work was a culmination of more than 50 years of theory development and practice in the areas of counseling and psychology. Glasser is the author of such books as Choice Theory, The Quality School, and The Quality School Teacher. The cause of failure in the schools is due to the fact that people believe in and practice stimulus/response psychology, which is behavior in response to a stimulus from outside an individual (Glasser, 1996). CT is suggested as an alternative since its principles are based upon the nurturing of human relationships that are supportive of students' needs in order to succeed in school (Glasser, 1996).

Although CT's focus is more intrinsically categorized and could have helped guide this research topic, SDT was reviewed to determine if it could serve as a better framework from which to conduct this research study since this research study sought to understand the nature of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Because SDT explains motivation from an internal and external perspective, it was determined that SDT would be used as the theoretical framework from which to conduct this research study. As outlined earlier in this document, SDT is an approach to human motivation concerned with investigating the innate growth tendencies of people and their psychological needs that serve as the foundation for their self-motivation, functioning, and integration of personality within social contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory focuses on the degree to which human behaviors are self-determined or the

degree to which people endorse their actions at the highest level of reflection and engage in actions with a full sense of choice (Rochester University, 2003). Unlike other theories of motivation, SDT possesses a critical added feature that lies within the category of behaviors that are deliberate or motivated (Deci et al., 1991).

To reiterate the significance and breadth of SDT, its motivational components are defined as follows: 1) Basic Needs Theory—posits three basic psychological needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness; 2) Causality Orientations Theory—proposes that intrinsic motivation is influenced by environmental evaluations and personality orientations; 3) Cognitive Evaluation Theory—accounts for situational factors that influence a person's intrinsic or extrinsic motivational functioning; and 4) Organismic Integration Theory—explains the different forms of extrinsic motivation and the factors that either encourage or hinder internalization and integration of the regulation for the behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Although there are four SDT components, two of them (Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory) were employed to provide the explanations to be evaluated in this study. These two theories are defined in more detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Basic Needs Theory includes three basic psychological needs consisting of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-initiating a behavior and self-regulating one's own actions is referred to as exhibiting autonomous or self-determined behavior (Deci et al., 1991). Competence involves understanding how to obtain varying results and being effective in performing the necessary actions to achieve them while relatedness involves developing secure and sustaining associations with

others in one's social environment (Deci et al., 1991). Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 238) explain the significance of this theory below:

> SDT proposes that people will tend naturally to internalize the values and regulations of their social groups. This tendency is facilitated by feelings of relatedness to socializing others as well as feelings of competence with respect to the regulation being internalized. The latter includes the ability to understand or grasp the meaning or rationale behind the regulation and an ability to enact it. Supports for relatedness and competence thus facilitate internalization and can be sufficient to produce introjected values or compartmentalized (poor integrated) identifications. However, for a regulation to become more integral to a person's self, supports for autonomy are also required. That is, although support for relatedness and competence needs may promote the internalization of a regulation or value, those supports alone will not be sufficient to foster integration. For integration to occur, there must be an opportunity for the individual to freely process and endorse transmitted values and regulations (and to modify or transform them when necessary).

Autonomy is unique when compared with competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For behavior that is controlled, it may be enough to satisfy the needs of competence and relatedness, however, satisfying the need for autonomy is necessary for a behavior that is goal-directed to be self-determined and for outcomes to occur that are associated with self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In conclusion, when an individual is able to satisfy their three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), "the regulation of their behavior will be characterized by choice,

volition, and autonomy rather than pressure, demand, and control" resulting in increased psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 243).

Turning to Organismic Integration Theory, it clarifies the variety of extrinsic motivation elements including external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. Extrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity to achieve an independent outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In essence, a person behaves in a manner to acquire a desired outcome like a reward or to avoid a defenseless penalty. "The more fully a regulation has been internalized, the more it represents integration and thus provides the basis for volitional behaving" (Deci et al., 1991). With introjected regulation, the conditional penalties are dispensed by the persons to themselves (Deci & Ryan, 2000). "Introjection represents a partial internalization in which regulations are in the person but have not really become part of the integrated set of motivations, cognitions, and affects that constitute the self. Because introjected regulations have not been assimilated to the self, the resulting behaviors are not self-determined" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 236). A form of extrinsic motivation that is self-determined or more autonomous is regulation through identification (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Identification "is the process through which people recognize and accept the underlying value of a behavior," (Deci & Ryan, 2000). "Identified regulation results when a behavior or regulation is adopted by the self as personally important or valuable" (Deci et al., 1991, p. 4). An individual more fully internalizes the regulation of a behavior accepting it as their own when they identify with the value of a behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Finally, integrated regulation is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and is the broadest form of internalization as it relates to extrinsic motivation

because it both identifies with the value of behaviors and integrates the recognition of those behaviors with added features of the person (Deci & Ryan, 2000). “Integrated regulation results from the integration or reciprocal assimilation of identified values and regulations into one’s coherent sense of self, and when an identification has become fully integrated, one will behave with a true sense of volition and willingness” (Deci et al., 1991, p. 4). The chart below reflects a self-determination continuum that shows the motivational, self-regulatory, and perceived locus of causality bases of behaviors that vary in the degree to which they are self-determined.

Behavior	Non-self-determined					Self-determined
Type of Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Type of Regulation	Non-regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal

(Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 237).

Outside of the realm in the findings of this study but for purposes of presenting a comprehensive understanding, amotivation refers to a condition in which a person lacks the intention to behave, resulting in a lack of motivation to act (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The position of amotivation distinguishes itself from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation because it denotes the deficiency of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and consequently lacks self-determination of the intentional behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Finally, an individual who is motivated from an intrinsic standpoint learns or engages

better in activities of challenge, according to findings in numerous laboratory studies (Deci & Ryan, 1982). Intrinsic motivation includes the inclination of seeking out innovation and contests, exploring, and exercising one's capabilities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In short, intrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity because it is naturally enjoyable or interesting (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In conclusion, the literature review to this point was useful in the way in which it shed possible light on the plight of African Americans, especially African-American men, in higher education. African Americans now have access to MWIs, however, African-American men trail African-American women in graduate school enrollments and in receipt of doctoral awards. Of concern was the fact that many African Americans pursuing doctorates in MWIs might have encountered white privilege and/or racism that might have diverted them from completing the doctorate. It was further considered that African Americans particularly needed affirmation of their self-esteem in childhood and support in their quest to achieve educationally. Furthermore, retention strategies like collaborative learning, participation in learning communities, positive relationships with faculty, and peer mentoring were deemed to be helpful for African-American men to persist in higher education. However, discrimination or racism was found likely to impact the persistence of African-American men who achieved their goals in education. The literature review yielded Choice Theory (CT) and Self-Determination Theory as possible frameworks to be used to analyze the findings of this study. However, SDT was used as the theoretical framework for this study because it explains motivation from an internal and external perspective. Finally, SDT was deemed appropriate to explore the aspects of motivation required to help African-American males to complete the doctorate.

Summary of Other Research Studies

The literature review yielded research studies that bore similarity in focus to this research study being undertaken. For example, in a research study of African-American male college students, narratives were provided that revealed motivational factors contributing to their success in graduating from an urban institution of higher education located in metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri (Clark, 2004). Findings revealed that African-American males had a strong desire to achieve in conventional society and were determined to avoid failing to complete the degree like many of their peers had experienced. Most of the research participants thought that they had been equipped to handle the academic work and many of them believed that they were successful because they had a solid association with family, friends, instructors, mentors, African-American cohorts, and religion.

In a research study of the doctoral experiences of African-American men and women, the contributions to their persistence in completing the doctorate and the role that race played in their experiences before and during their doctoral studies as well as their perceptions of how their race impacted their success were explored. The study revealed that race can positively impact the success of African-American graduate students rather than create potential barriers to success, a finding that was contrary to the findings of some scholarly research and as was previously thought (Bingman, 2003). The study further revealed that the research participants gained academic and emotional support from college professors, administrators, and students of diverse backgrounds who understood the potential racial barriers that African-American students can encounter at MWIs, and that pride in being African American contributed to their success.

Another qualitative study, drawing on phenomenology (a complementary methodology to interpretivism), had similar findings. In this study where eight African-American students' persistence in doctoral programs at MWIs was investigated, the purpose was to gain an understanding of the factors that enhanced African-American persistence and successful completion of the doctoral process at MWIs (Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie & Sanders, 1997). The findings revealed that forming positive relationships in the university environment was significant for graduation (Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie & Sanders, 1997). The findings also revealed that rooted in the realm of persistence were three elements, the academic culture, graduate faculty members, and relationships with peers (Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie & Sanders, 1997).

These studies suggested that African-American males were determined to achieve in society and were equipped to handle academic work. Contrary to the concept that white privilege and racism could be obstacles to degree completion, it was revealed that race could contribute positively to the achievement of African-American graduate students, that African-American males who achieved were supported academically and emotionally by their professors and peers who understood their condition in the academic culture, and that a positive racial identity was instrumental to the educational achievement of African-American males.

The next chapter will provide details regarding the methodology that was used for this research investigation. The chapter describes the research design and methods that were employed in order to conduct this research inquiry.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the issues and experiences related to the motivation of African-American males toward the completion of the doctorate in Majority White Institutions (MWIs). This chapter opens with an overview of the research design. It then outlines the technique for recruitment of the research participants, the procedures of data collection, including the process of interviewing, and data analysis procedures. Finally, it addresses issues of credibility, dependability, ethical standards.

Research Design

Given the purposes of this study, an "interpretive qualitative" approach was determined to be the most appropriate to obtain a breadth of information and perceptions. Interpretive methods were employed in this study to uncover the meaning of the experiences of the participants. Interpretivism is a general term for all qualitative study (Schwandt, 2001); it involves investigating "reality as it appears to individuals" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 477). "Interpretivism" refers also to approaches used to study the social life of individuals in order to gain an understanding of a phenomenon, actions, or experiences. This method assumes that the meaning of human acts is inherent in those human acts (Schwandt, 2001).

Interpretivism involves two features; experience and meaning (Schwandt, 2001). Exploring human lived experience is a function of qualitative inquiry that depicts the life and environment of the person studied as the life is lived, felt, undergone, perceived, and accomplished. The researcher is able to uncover and describe the experience lived by the research participants including their intentions, interactions, and significance the

participants fasten to their actions by using appropriate methods to examine and explore the phenomena. Exploration of the research participants' experiences enables them to reflect on their experiences in an effort to describe them in detail so that they serve as a basis of an analysis that depicts the essence of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

The interpretivist orientation embraces two different views of the definition of meaning and how it can be understood (Schwandt, 2001). Schwandt (2001) describes the first view as an act's meaning that is located in the perception of an individual's motivations, intentions, desires, beliefs, and attitudes for which the researcher used a method of enactment of the experience from a psychological perspective that facilitated tapping into the individual's personal description of the act. He describes the second view as an act that has significance because it is part of a larger group of actions. The goal of research is to understand the intention of the act by locating it within some comprehensive scheme of communication or of institutionalized values and norms. As is distinct in the interpretivist tradition, these views assume that the meaning of an action is complete, and consequently, the researcher is able to discover the meaning.

As a collection of interpretive practices, qualitative research does not give a preference of one methodology over another methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), rather, "Qualitative research seeks to understand a situation by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables" (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996, p. 22). This kind of research attends to the process of how people talk about the meaning of their experiences and addresses the background of events under investigation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In sum, the term qualitative places importance on processes and meanings

that are not thoroughly examined or measured by use of numbers, amount, strength, or rate of recurrence (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

In support of the effort to gain a full understanding of the experience being explored (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the use of these methods, such as observation, interviews, and documentary analysis are the most pervasive (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996). To illustrate the above, qualitative methods were utilized in a study whereby the experiences of university life were described by 11 African-American undergraduate students who attended a predominantly White university (Davis, Dias-Bowie, Greenberg, Klukken, Pollio, Thomas, & Thompson, 2004). Another qualitative research study of the doctoral attrition process utilized the method of in-depth interviews for the purpose of developing case studies (Golde, 2000). From a methodological standpoint, qualitative techniques were deemed better suited for drawing out the insider viewpoint and for determining the purpose and meaning that the individuals studied associated with their actions to stay in or withdraw from a doctoral program.

Research Participants

The purposive sampling technique was used initially, because this technique affords the selection of cases that are deemed to be “information-rich” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 165) providing broad and in-depth understanding of individuals or a phenomenon. This technique seemed to be appropriate in this study because the participants were of the target population in the sample and able to offer a wealth of information. The research participants chosen to participate were African American men who completed the doctorate at Majority White Institutions in the last 10 years.

The snowball sampling method was employed following the purposive sampling method because enough participants were not identified initially through the purposive sampling technique. This method involved asking people to recommend cases who fit the criteria (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). As the process of asking people to recommend appropriate cases to study continued, the researcher discovered what Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003, p. 179) have referred to as "an increasing number of well-situated people and an increasing number of recommended cases, all or some of whom were included in the sample." A limitation of this sampling procedure was that it could have compromised external validity regarding a population (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). However, since this study was not designed to generalize its results from the sample to a larger target group, use of the purposive sampling and snowballing methods were determined to be suitable.

Twelve (12) African-American males were identified to be interviewed. The purpose in selecting the men to be interviewed was to choose those who would be "information-rich" with regard to the purpose of the study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The criteria that were used to select the research participants were three-fold. The participants had to have completed their doctorates at a MWI and the participants had to be African-American men who had attained a doctorate in the last 10 years. African-American males who graduated from MWIs in the United States and who successfully completed their doctoral programs were identified, and on an informal basis, the researcher asked professionals who were known to the researcher in these higher education institutions to provide names of individuals to interview. A list of possible participants was developed and it was determined that if this process failed to elicit enough participants for the study, the researcher would contact the appropriate

administrators at varying higher education institutions to solicit possible prospects to interview. Each participant who was intended to be interviewed was contacted via telephone or e-mail regarding his possible participation in the study. The initial contact served as an introduction to the research project. The purpose of the study, information about the researcher, and the approximate time needed from each interviewee were shared with each participant, with a specific date, time, and place scheduled to conduct each interview.

Data Collection and the Interview Process

Data were collected on two occasions through direct face-to-face interaction and/or telephone using in-depth interviews with African-American men who had completed doctorates at MWIs. A mapping or “clustering” process (Karpiak, 2000, 1990) was used at the initial stage of the interview for the purpose of generating data and maintaining a non-directive stance on the part of the researcher to allow the participant to create the direction of the responses. "Clustering" is an evocative tool with the capability to generate images, ideas, feelings, and recalled experiences. Originally developed as a technique for creative writing (Rico, 1983) and adapted by Karpiak (1990) for research, it has shown itself to be a useful tool for data gathering. Accordingly, in the first phase of the interview, even before responses to other questions of the interview protocol had been elicited, participants were offered written guidelines and asked to "cluster" around the phrase, “My Motivation to Complete a Doctorate” (see Appendix B). Participants also were asked to “cluster” around the phrase, “Challenges of Doctoral Study” (see Appendix C). Once the participant had completed the exercise, the resulting clusters formed the structure of that portion of the interview. Participants were asked to take the researcher

through the clusters to the depth and detail that they wished. The tape-recorder was turned on for all the research participants, except one, and the interview began. For the research participant not taped, notes were taken and periodically, the participant was asked to talk slower to enable the responses to be written accurately. After each participant had addressed the clusters, the participant was requested to number each respective cluster in order of its priority in relation to the others. This latter exercise provided the researcher with the relative weight of each point for each participant, thereby offering a basis of comparison of the rank ordering of the weight of an issue amongst the other participants.

The researcher taped the interviews of the research participants (all except one) and research participants were given the freedom to stop an interview at any time. Each interview tape was transcribed and the transcripts were reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. Tapes of 90-minute length were used in an effort to minimize distractions during the interview and to guarantee the durability and quality of each tape.

In addition to the “clustering” exercise, the interview process incorporated a brief interview guide comprised of statements or questions designed to extract additional information pertinent to the study. The researcher achieved depth of understanding by listening for and exploring key words, ideas, and themes using follow-up questions to enable the research participants to elaborate on what they had said that the researcher felt was crucial to the research. Probing statements or questions were posed only if necessary to assure that specific topics were addressed in the context of the stories supplied by the participants and to address some of the themes indicated in the literature review only if the participants failed to mention some that seemed critical to the researcher. Latitude

was given to respondents to encourage complete disclosure of their experiences. The researcher transcribed the tapes of the interviews and organized the presentation of the data for each interview around common themes. The initial interview identified the emergent themes. This process was a result of each participant's identification of their motivation for doctorate completion and revelation of challenges incurred during doctoral study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The same qualitative approach described earlier was used to analyze and interpret the data comprising a breadth of information and perceptions related to the phenomenon that emerged from interviews. The data were assessed to determine their appropriateness for broadening the understanding regarding the research topic. Specifically, the researcher coded the data gathered by identifying common themes. Links were shown from codes to categories and from sub-themes to themes to assure that the themes emerged from the data analyzed.

To analyze and interpret the meaning of the data gathered regarding the individual experiences of each research participant, direct interpretations of individual instances were made in relation to the SDT model's sub-theories. The tenets of Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination model served as the theoretical framework and lens through which the data obtained were analyzed to respond to the research questions. More specifically, two sub-theories of the SDT model that were directly related to the data were used to analyze the data. The first sub-theory was Basic Needs Theory, which posits three basic psychological needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The second sub-theory was Organismic Integration Theory, which distinguishes the different forms of

extrinsic motivation and the aspects that either encourage or hinder internalization and integration of the regulation for the behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

A second interview was conducted with each research participant to share with him the major themes identified and to allow each to generate feedback either to elaborate or contradict the findings. There was no need to change data obtained in the initial interviews. In addition, it was not necessary to develop a set of interview questions for the second interview to obtain clarification from a research participant or to encourage elaboration if an identified theme from the first interview was unclear or was not rich enough.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is enhanced when the researcher conducts the inquiry in such a manner that there is a balance of how the respondents' perspectives of their experiences are described and the researcher's "reconstruction and representation of same" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 258). In this study, credibility was advanced through the method of member checking, which is the process of having the research participants review statements made in the researcher's reconstruction of the participants' perspectives in the researcher's report for completeness and accuracy (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Member checking also was used as a strategy to help assure accuracy. This strategy is another way of generating data and insight by having research participants judge the completeness and accuracy of statements made in the researcher's interview transcript and the researcher's initial interpretation (Gall et al., 2003). In using this strategy, the researcher minimized injecting bias (Schwandt, 2001). The researcher used member checking through the second interview via telephone or in person, which

allowed the researcher to share with the participant the major themes that had presented and allowed these men to comment further. Great effort was made to conduct interviews in the same manner for all participants.

There were some threats to the credibility of this study. Although the research participants were African-American men, there were some differences in their perceptions based upon differences in the higher education institutions that they attended and/or the regions in the USA in which they lived at the time of doctoral study and now. To avoid these threats, African-American male participants were sought from MWIs in the USA with comparable student populations.

Dependability

Dependability rested on the "process of the inquiry and the inquirer's responsibility for ensuring that the process was logical, traceable, and documented" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 258). Use of the "audit trail" was used as a documentation system maintained systematically. Included in the documentation system was the data generated in interviews, the process used in conducting the study, personal notes, observations, the theoretical framework that shaped the study, concepts, models explained along with the findings, conclusion of the investigation, and records of the researcher's decision regarding whom to interview and what to observe and why. This process involved the researcher's keeping of comprehensive notes and records of activities in an organized, retrievable method (Ary et al., 2002).

Turning to this study and reflecting on the approach as suggested by Schwandt (2001), the researcher was able to uncover and describe the experience of these African-American men who completed the doctorate including their intentions, interactions, and

motivation to complete the degree by using appropriate methods to examine and explore the phenomena. Using the terminology of Moustakas (1994) in describing the experience of research participants, these African-American men's experiences enabled them to reflect on their experiences in an effort to describe them in detail so that they could serve as a basis of an analysis that depicted the essence of the experiences.

Ethics and Human Relations

The University of Oklahoma Human Research Participant Protection Program certified the researcher for conducting this research investigation and it was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. Potential participants were solicited to participate in the study either by a phone call or e-mail. Scripts to be used in the phone call or e-mail solicitation for participation in the study were submitted to the IRB for approval. It did not become necessary to place calls to the appropriate administrative offices at MWIs to request the information needed to identify research participants. For the 12 participants interviewed in this qualitative study, efforts were employed to assure anonymity of the respondents with regard to their higher education institutions in the publishing of their perceptions. In order to participate in the study, participants were requested to sign an informed consent to participate in the study (see Appendix A). In addition, the research participants were given a letter explaining the consent for tape-recorded interviews. Number and pseudonym were written on each participant's audiotape transcript and audiotape label. The researcher transcribed all audiotapes to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. Pseudonyms were used to identify subjects within the research document and participants were identifiable on the audiotapes of the interviews by a number. The researcher kept audiotapes in the researcher's home and

denied non-project personnel access to the tapes. At the conclusion of the research project, the audiotapes were erased.

Ethics in research includes informed consent, which involves protecting participants from harm by informing them of what will occur during the research investigation process, the information to be disclosed to the researcher, and what is intended of the research data to be collected (Gall et al., 2003). “Informed consent has to be voluntary” (Yow, 1994, p. 91). The aim of informed consent is to relay to the participant the importance and desirability of their participation and to inform the participant of the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Each research participant was sent a letter describing the research and the conditions of their participation. “Research participants should be told at the outset of the study who will have access to data” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 72). The research participants in this study were provided with an informed consent to assure confidentiality. The researcher’s responsibilities as the researcher and the research participant’s responsibilities were delineated, consistent with ethical research principles. These ethical guidelines were followed in keeping with the regulations of the OU IRB. A copy of the Informed Consent is located in Appendix A of this document. These ethical guidelines ensured that the participants were informed of the nature of the research study and the dangers and obligations that were involved.

This chapter begins with an overview of the research design that describes the “interpretive qualitative” approach employed to uncover the meaning of the experiences of the participants. The chapter then outlines the data collection procedures including the process of interviewing. This is followed by delineating the data analysis procedures and

revealing how the tenets of Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination model served as the theoretical framework and lens through which the data obtained were analyzed to respond to the research questions. Finally, the chapter addresses issues of credibility utilizing the member-checking strategy, dependability that specifies use of the "audit trail," and ethical standards that utilize informed consent.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This research study sought to gain an understanding of the motivation of African-American males to complete the doctorate. In order to gain insight into this phenomenon, twelve (12) African-American males, who had completed a doctorate in the last 10 years at a majority white institution (MWI) in the United States of America, were interviewed. These research participants engaged in two "clustering" exercises, wherein they reflected upon their educational experiences at the doctoral level to identify their motivations for undertaking the doctorate as well as challenges experienced while completing the doctorate. In addition, a semi-structured interview guide was used to capture information from the research participants that was supplementary to the information uncovered in the clustering exercise.

Motivation to Complete the Doctorate

The summary of findings that follows presents a picture of the motivation of these African-American men to complete the doctorate. These motivations can be categorized into four themes that emerged from the data. The first theme focused on the pursuit of the degree as a source of inspiration. The second theme concerned the inspiration gained from interpersonal relationships. The desire for professional goal achievement was identified as a third theme. Lastly, an interest in various dimensions of community service became identified as the fourth theme. Each of these represented part of the driving force of both the higher education arena and the community at-large to act as motivators for these men to complete their degree. In the paragraphs that follow, each of these themes will be discussed and illustrated.

The Pursuit of the Doctorate as a Source of Inspiration

A source of information seemed to be the best concept to depict the first overall theme of motivation to complete the doctorate. For the majority of the research participants, attaining the doctorate was a source of inspiration, which encompassed their inner spiritual beliefs and activities, which served as a means of support for them to persevere through doctoral study to completion. Others identified their love for learning, their research interests, and/or their desire to take advantage of individual strengths as aspects of motivation to achieve the doctorate.

Religious Activities

Like a crystal pyramid, spirituality clearly served as a mechanism for support through the doctoral study process for half of the research participants. The majority of the African-American men interviewed revealed that their religious activities motivated them to continue through the doctoral program and although the remaining men did not identify spirituality specifically as a *motivation* to complete the doctorate, these men spoke about their spirituality as being a *support* mechanism, when facing challenges during the doctoral program. The examples given revealed that the these spiritual activities helped to shape the attitudes of these men when engaging in academic study as well as provided a basis of strength and support, when facing challenging experiences in the doctoral program. For most, exercising their faith in God gave them direction.

The Case of Larenz.

Larenz was reared in a single-parent home in the central United States. He received his bachelor's degree from a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), and received the master's and doctoral degrees from the same predominantly white

university (PWI) in north central United States (U.S.). Larenz consistently had favorable grades in the early grades and centered most of his life around sports. Most of his family worked as blue collar workers and did not encourage Larenz to be a scholar. Larenz had suffered from a gunshot injury, which caused some dexterity dysfunction. Thus, initially he started studying to try to understand his own psychosocial and physical limitations. In the course of his bachelor's degree studies, he found out that there was such a disparity in the delivery of services for minorities in his field. Additionally, when he pursued his master's degree, he noted that there were few Black professors, and this awareness sparked his interest in pursuing the doctorate to become an educator. Larenz's goal was to become instrumental in changing some of the health policies and procedures and the ways in which some interventions were provided.

Spirituality was deemed very important in Larenz's life. He stressed that he sought God for motivation because he believed that he had succeeded and persevered through many situations. "I think you do all things through Christ who strengthens you," Larenz said. "I believe in that and that's how I try to overcome anything that I am facing." Larenz observed that he sought God first before he acted in situations.

The Case of Adam.

Adam grew up in a single-parent home, his parents having divorced by the time that he was about six years old. He was reared by his mother, who worked as a housekeeper. "She did the best that she could and she did a wonderful job at it," Adam recalled. Adam pursued the doctorate because he wanted to show his children that an education was important and to show them what respect could be gained by obtaining a post-bachelor's degree. Adam was the first in his family to go to college. He attended

college in the central U.S. and completed the doctorate in the north central U.S. Adam's wife was supportive of Adam by working full-time, which, in turn, freed Adam from working even part-time, while working on his dissertation. He acknowledges that his wife's support helped him to focus fully on his writing.

Adam described how he prayed and sought the Lord's intent and will for his life. Adam applied for the Ph.D. Program trusting that he would get admitted to the program. "Through prayer and faith in God, He allowed things to happen just as I willed His will to be done," Adam said, admitting that there were plenty of times that he got "fiercely angry" with either professors or with the situation, but he drew motivation from prayer.

The Case of James.

A strong spiritual foundation was crucial to James, who grew up in the southwestern U.S., was the product of a two-parent home and highly influenced by the men in his family. His grandfather was the eleventh of 13 children, of which nine were boys. His father earned three master's degrees and was considering the pursuit of the doctorate. At James' last family reunion, his family members counted 15 Ph.D.s, 12 medical doctors, two who were practicing surgeons, and eight of whom were in dentistry. Only four family members are in the scholarly field. James received his higher education in the same region where he was reared, although he completed some of his doctoral work at a military installation outside of the U.S. It is evident that education was deemed important in his family. James pursued the doctorate based on his family influences and the firm support of his wife.

James is guided by the scripture from the Bible that indicates that greater is He that lives within you than he that is in the world. James believes that if a person believes

the scripture, he need only to have a vision, set goals to get to the vision, and move forward toward the vision. “You can’t stop what God has destined,” James said. “What God has for me, He has for me.” Others among the research participants, Charles, Marcus, and Earl also shared the perspective of the importance of faith in God and embraced the view that spirituality was a motivator to complete the doctorate.

To summarize, half of the research participants revealed through examples, how their spiritual beliefs helped shape their attitudes when they engaged in academic study. These religious activities provided a foundation of strength and support when they faced challenging experiences in the doctoral program, and foremost, their faith in God gave them direction.

Love for Learning and Taking Advantage of Individual Strengths

Doctoral study was a source of inspiration of many of the research participants that was shaped not only by spiritual beliefs and activities, but also by their love for learning, their research interests, and/or desire to take advantage of individual strengths.

The Case of James.

In reflection, James who earlier had said that one could not stop what God had destined shared how achieving the doctorate had been a desire of his from high school. “I actually wanted to get it done,” he said. He shared how his Dad had asked him to give him his five, 10, and 20-year goals at his graduation high school dinner. “I had originally planned on being done (with the doctorate) by 30, but serving our country (military) in active duty deterred that a little bit,” James said. “I am just thankful I was able to come back and finish.” James shared how he loved to read, write, and lecture, and believed that the only way to be able to speak profoundly on certain issues was to have knowledge

and/or experience with those issues. Thus, since he knew that he was going to be committed to education, he set out to equip himself to learn as much as possible so that he could provide something beneficial to students. He recalled:

> I don't just want to stand up there wasting their time. Regarding achieving the doctorate, you are going to do it because you want it, you enjoy it, and you are seeking it because there is no other way for you.

The Case of Samson.

Samson revealed that he knew that he wanted to have a quality of life that was better than what his parents had and better than what his parents were able to provide for him. Samson, who was reared in the southern U.S., grew up in a single-parent household with his mother who instilled in him and his sisters the value of education. His mother started college, but circumstances derailed her degree completion. But, she had goals for her children to become professionals and urged them to get good grades, believing that those good grades ultimately would help her children to accomplish their goals, according to Samson, who excelled in the math and sciences in school. Samson's grandfather, who had a fifth grade education and his own successful repair business, was a model for Samson since his grandfather was able to do what some people believe are menial jobs and provide a certain quality of life for his entire family. Samson, who excelled in the math and sciences in school, earned his degrees in the same region where he was reared, wanted to complete the doctorate to have a quality of life that was better than his parents were able to provide for him and to provide for his son those things that he did not have as a child, as he notes, below:

> I wanted him to have everything that I didn't have and I knew that in order to provide that as well as to give back to my own family, to my mom, I needed to get a terminal degree to reach one of those points in life where I could make lots of money to get me there, although I think I chose the one that makes the least money.

Samson's original goal in life was to be a doctor, which was what his mother had wanted him to do while he grew up, as he described, below:

> I've always thought that there's a way to do it better, that I could always perfect things, so internally, I've had this drive all my life that has caused me to want to always push myself to the maximum and getting the terminal degree for me was going to the maximum. It was the most that I could do, educationally, to attain my goals and I felt that once I got there, there was no stopping me then. And so, I never stopped going to school from undergrad all the way through. Knowing that there were possibilities (with the terminal degree) helped to motivate me and drive me to get my terminal degree.

The Case of Charles.

Charles, who stressed the need for a spiritual foundation, revealed how he was grateful to go in what he considered the right direction instead of pursuing a thuggish life with drugs and alcohol. Charles' views were similar to the views of Adam. Charles grew up in the southwestern U.S., and drew inspiration from the songs that helped him appreciate his heritage and culture. A person who could sing in a strong bass tone, Charles participated in plays and the creative arts. He completed his higher education degrees within the same region for which he grew up. He was passionate about his

heritage and believed that he had to prove to himself and to others that African-Americans were not an "inferior species" and that Black men are not "an endangered group of people." Stressing that African Americans were strong people, Charles said that he wanted to go in another direction that was upstanding, professional, and contributed to society. He revealed that he had a zeal for learning as he talked about research:

> All knowledge is new knowledge and I feel empowered when I have information, not just information in my mind, but information in my heart where I can call on it to make a point. I told everyone that I was going to go out and get a Ph.D. All my friends were rooting for me, including my former teachers who had written recommendations to get me accepted into the program. What was I to do? Get accepted and then drop out? Say it was too tough? I'm already a Black male. No—I wasn't going to have that. A Ph.D. is honorable. It's good to call you Dr., Professor. That's a nice title to have and it's respectful.

Charles said that his doctorate was important to him and indicated that it was because he was a Black man.

> My people were slaves in this country, kidnapped, and stolen out of Africa and we were told we were inferior (anger passion) and so I had to prove to myself and to others that we are not an inferior species and the Black man is not an endangered group of people. We are strong and some of us are warriors. I've always known that education was important and I guess when I decided that higher education had all the resources, it became a personal goal. I have realized, of course, I can't do it alone. I have to kind of help build an army of people. That's why I wanted to teach. I have had to realize that I cannot do all the educational programs and I

cannot write all the policies. I can't be the only messenger. I have to plant seeds of self empowerment and challenge our young people. It is like this, which is Malcolm X's quote: if you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. And so, I cannot do it by myself. He felt that he needed to create protégés to be like him.

The Case of Earl.

Finally, Earl, who was supported by his wife and children in his doctoral degree attainment, shared that high school was a "passing experience" for him, but college was imposed by his parents. Earl was reared on a farm in a rural community. His father had a third grade education and his mother had a ninth grade education. But, it was emphasized in his family to read books, to write, do math, and study science as well as to graduate from high school and attend college. Earl, who came from a large family, in which many of his brothers and his sister had attended college and graduated, was encouraged to follow that tradition. Earl's parents encouraged education of their children and Earl believed that this was due in part to his parents' experience of survival through two depressions. Like other research participants, Earl was given strong support from his wife and children.

"That's what really counted," Earl said. "I knew that with a college degree, I was getting a skill set that was going to help me throughout my life. He explored what he could do above the master's level and decided that he could do research, causing him to pursue the Ph.D. "I looked at writing curriculum from a diverse point of view," Earl said, and recalled his dawning awareness of the contradictions that existed:

> Throughout the high school, K-12 years, one can count on one finger the number of African American teachers engaged after segregation. So segregation for me occurred during my first grade. We would ride the bus together and we would play together, but when it came to school as you very well know, we got off at one school or the other. We would always say to other kids, 'Why don't you come down to our school; it's really fun there.' But then what happened was—and I can vividly remember this—our parents would say, 'Are you all going to go to another school and ya'll go do this. Because of the tenor of the times, many African Americans thought that whites were not only better, but smarter than them. But, when we saw the grades, we realized that the group of Blacks from my high school graduation realized that they were no smarter than us. We just took over every award, not only athletic, but academically. So, we realized that we were just as smart as anyone else.

Earl advised that young African-American males need to be aware of the consequences that can affect them whether they are watching some "crazy junk on TV, which is nothing but fantasy to some extent, or if they are some place where it's hard to get out, education is the road," Earl said. "If you don't work the system, the system is going to work you."

The Case of Gary.

The doctorate was a personal goal for Gary too, who was reared by his mother in a rural area of the southeastern U.S. Since she experienced some problems in advocating for her children in the public school system, she enrolled Gary into a Christian academy from the time that he was in fifth grade, where Gary saw professional men, although he

said they were white. He was inspired to do what they did and develop the kind of lifestyles they had. Gary, who always wanted to achieve and become employed in an arena where he could be respected, earned his bachelor's degree in the same region where he was reared and completed his master's degree and doctorate at a PWI in the U.S.'s mid-west. His wife was supportive of his goal of achieving the doctorate and Gary wanted to model the value of educational achievement for his children.

Gary revealed how he had known for a long time that he was an above-average writer. "Even from the time that I was in secondary school, I used to win writing contests school-wide and get invited to young authors' competitions," he said. He shared that achieving the doctorate was a personal goal and a motivation for him because he believed that it was needed to have financial stability for his wife and children, as he expresses below:

> Based upon my personal background in that I knew what it was like to work hard and achieve, and I knew what poverty looked like firsthand, and based upon the community I grew up in, I knew how important it was for me to have financial stability in a job that was going to pay well, and particularly have good benefits—health benefits/medical benefits for me and for my family. I saw early on that one of my strengths was in the writing arena—being able to write, understand, read stuff, understand it. And, so I felt like if I could get a doctorate and land a job where I would get to do this kind of work, especially writing and making things happen, getting the doctorate would be great.

For those research participants who wanted to achieve the doctorate because of their love for learning, research interests, and desire to take advantage of individual

strengths, doctoral study was a source of inspiration for doctoral achievement from another perspective. In summary, attaining the doctorate was a source of inspiration for the majority of the African-American men who served as research participants. For some of them, doctoral study was a way to participate in activities that they enjoyed due to their love for learning, research interests, and/or desire to take advantage of individual strengths. However, as part of many of these men's daily lives and when faced with challenging experiences or circumstances in the doctoral study process, the religious activities of these men served as a means of support to continue through the doctoral program and to complete the doctorate.

Motivation Gained from Interpersonal Relationships

Turning to interpersonal relationships, the second theme, family and/or mentors were the sources of the two greatest interpersonal relationships revealed as motivators to complete the doctorate. Almost all of the research participants identified a family member or multiple family members as being a motivating force for their completion. Family members identified included parents, one parent only, grandparents, one grandparent only, siblings, and/or spouse. In addition to family members, most of the research participants identified mentors as being a second interpersonal relationship motivator. The mentors identified were either an integral part of the doctoral program or university such as the doctoral committee chair or a faculty member, or outside the university community, like a friend or colleague who had experienced earning a doctorate or a mentor who just seemed to give advice at strategic times in the life of the research participant. In addition, friends, fraternal organizations, and/or dissertation support

groups were identified as other interpersonal relationship motivators for research participants to complete the doctorate.

Family Members

A family member or multiple family members were identified by most of the research participants as being a motivating force for their completing the doctorate. Family members identified included parents, one parent only, grandparents, one grandparent only, siblings, and/or a spouse.

The Case of Blair.

Looking at achieving the doctorate was simple from Blair's viewpoint. Blair, who was born and reared in the southern U.S., earned his higher education degrees in the same region. His parents instilled in him the development of a strong faith in God and the nurturing of the family. Blair's father reared him to be a man, according to Blair, which meant that Blair had to develop the strength of character, conviction, and commitment that originated from within and not from without, while Blair's mother helped him to learn to set goals for himself. In addition, Blair's parents stressed reading, writing, and a strong work ethic. Blair was highly motivated to complete the doctorate, to provide abundantly for his family, and to be part of a positive statistic of one in a group that is trying to do something for one's community rather than a negative statistic of a Black male in jail. "Providing for family really captures it," Blair said. "The correlation is very clear between one's ability to get a higher degree and the likelihood of one's ability to increase the base of the family income, which should go higher," he said. This African American man had achieved two master's degrees and then the Ph.D.

In Blair's case, his father taught him to gain his motivation from within to complete anything.

> My Dad raised me to be a man, and to be a man, you have to find it from within and not from without. The strength of character, the strength of conviction, the strength of commitment—that comes from within. It doesn't matter how much my Mama would want it for me, if I didn't find it from within for myself, it wouldn't be anything.

The Case of Marcus.

In contrast to a father, Marcus cited his mother as a motivating force. Marcus was reared in the north U.S. by his mother, and reared in a family that placed little emphasis on education even though children were urged to finish high school. His younger sister completed her master's degree while his two older sisters completed their bachelor's degrees. His two brothers failed to finish high school; however, his younger brother joined the military, received a high school equivalent diploma, and earned a bachelor's degree during his time in service. Marcus completed his degrees in the southwest U.S., earned his master's degree and one doctorate in the same field of study, and a second doctorate in a different field of study. "She was very proud when I received my master's and I decided that I really wanted to go back and complete my doctorate," Marcus said. He shared how getting the doctorate became "a point of contention" for him. This contention produced two doctorates for Marcus. Furthermore, Marcus was not only motivated by his mother, but his wife was encouraging to him and served as a motivating force.

She got some pride out of me completing the first doctorate as well as the second one. She was just as proud of both of them. In fact, she still has the gowns and stuff—I don't care about that stuff. But, she still has all of that. If it wasn't for her, I know I wouldn't have made it. She was right there even though at times she got as frustrated as I did with the university and the program because of the way they did things.

The Cases of Gary, Larenz, and Samson.

Like Marcus, Gary, who revealed how he was like his mother a great deal, relayed how his relationship with his mother was motivating for him to complete the doctorate. "I can survive anything," Gary said. "You can beat me down and I can feel lower than the snake, but I'm going to come back. I'm going to keep coming back."

Larenz also talked about his "Mom." Larenz said, "What she didn't give me in guidance, I think she helped me because she never stood in my way. If I needed an encouraging word, she was always there to keep me grounded."

Samson, who shared the experiences of Marcus and Gary, talked about how his "Mom" raised him as a single parent. "I'm not really sure if it was because she always told me I was smart or I was really just smart," Samson said. He excelled in subjects in school and revealed that his mom would say to him, 'You're going to be a doctor. You're going to be a brain surgeon one day.' "Well, I learned very early on that you always need to have a Plan A and a Plan B," Samson said. His initial plan was to become a medical doctor, which might have been a result of what he termed, the family motivation.

Although, she herself (his mom) did not complete college, she always instilled in me and my sisters the importance of education. And so, for her, because she

always had these grandiose goals for us to become doctors and lawyers, she always encouraged and motivated us to get good grades because she knew that those good grades would ultimately help us to accomplish our goals.

Samson also talked about how his grandfather, who only had a fifth grade education, had helped Samson develop what he considered to be intrinsic motivation.

> He started his own repair business and did very well with it. I guess some of my internal drive came from him by how I just watched how through his sweat on his own back and muscles, he was able to make what most people would call menial jobs provide a certain quality of life for our entire family.

The Case of Percy.

Percy was another research participant who shared how his "Mom" was a motivational force for him to complete his doctorate. Percy grew up in a household with his mother, grandmother, and great grandmother in the southeastern U.S. His mother, who worked a couple jobs in school systems, simultaneously worked on advanced degrees (two master's degrees) during the time Percy grew up. His first experience with college was going to some of her classes during the summer. As he completed his master's degree, his mother urged him to pursue the doctorate. Percy believes that his mother wanted him to pursue what she had been unable to pursue due to her responsibilities. "I was going into an MBA (Master of Business Administration) program," Percy said, "but from her perspective, she really encouraged me to go ahead and work on my doctorate." He continued:

> My Mom had worked on a couple of master's degrees as well as a Specialist credential, and of course, I came along. She seemed to regret the fact that she

never had an opportunity to work on her doctorate. So she really encouraged me to work on my doctorate and she said, 'You can get your MBA later.' As a matter of fact, I'm really considering it now.

Percy continued by talking about his grandmother who, he revealed, was very close to him and whose support served as a motivating force for him to complete the doctorate.

I grew up in a household with my mom, my grandmother, and my great grandmother. My Mom worked quite a bit. She worked a couple of jobs in school systems and at the same time, she was working on advanced degrees during the time I was growing up.

Percy's first experience with college was going to some of his mother's classes during the summer. Simultaneously, Percy's grandmother was always there for him at home. She fixed his food, and got him dressed and ready for school on a daily basis. "I had a closer bond with her just because she was there and was so supportive," Percy said.

The Case of James.

The modeling and encouragement of both of James' parents were motivators for James. Growing up in a family of educators, James thought that the appreciation and respect for the education process was instilled in him (and his siblings) at a very young age, as he describes, below:

As a kid, we did things because Mom and Dad said to do it. It's interesting because if you train them the way they are supposed to grow, when they are old, they are not going to depart from it I believe one of the proverbs says. But, it was a desire of mine from high school to complete my doctorate.

James‘ grandmother and grandfather had graduated from the same higher education institution, which was a different higher education institution from the one James attended to pursue the doctorate. His grandparents had applied to this institution where he was pursuing his doctorate. He recalls:

> They were told that due to their ethnicity that —in short, the quota had been met at that particular time—and they needed to apply to other institutions. So, because that particular institution denied them, I was just that more stern to achieve the degree through that same university.

James’ university provided him with graduate education experiences, but failed to offer programs that he was interested in. James wanted to obtain a degree that was going to be tangible and meaningful to his life. “With that as a driving force and the fact that the cultural barriers just 50 years ago denied two very viable and competitive applicants (his grandparents), I said, ‘I’m going to get this one for you guys,’” James said. He revealed how his grandfather was eleventh of 13 and of those 13, nine were boys. James’ grandfather died before he finished his master’s degree, but he was able to call his grandmother, who resided across the country, to read his master’s diploma to her. Later, he finished his Prospectus while sitting at her dining room table. His grandmother said something to him that he never forgot while he sat at her dining room table. “She said, ‘God is using you to prepare for your grandchildren.’ She said that of her six grandchildren, you are the only one that has chosen to follow in our footsteps and because of your obedience, you will be rewarded—and I’m so proud of you,” James said.

The Case of Earl.

Like James, Earl recalled how his parents had inspired him to complete the doctorate in spite of the fact that his father had a third grade education and his mother had a ninth grade education. Earl was reared on a farm in a rural community, but it was emphasized in their home that books, reading, writing, math, and science (the traditional subjects) were important and that graduating from high school and going to college were important, as he describes, below:

> What was unique in my family, which is a large family, was that many of my brothers and my sister had been to college and had graduated. So, it was incumbent on us to continue that tradition. Our parents got us ready from a mental aspect of getting ready for college and it was more ingrained that when you graduated from high school, you were to attend college and to know what you wanted to major in.

Earl's parents motivated and influenced him and his siblings by how they were involved in their K-12 education whether by speaking to their teachers or other community leaders of which they were a part. "Education was definitely a foremost," Earl said. "I also think that they motivated us with the example of how they came through two depressions and here we were first generation graduates."

The Cases of Edward and Adam.

Edward, who grew up in the southwestern U.S. and earned his bachelor's degree in the same region, shared how he was taught to become the best that he could become. "Once you start something, you have to give it your all," Edward said. He earned a master's degree in the northeastern U.S., and started work on a doctorate in one field.

However, while studying one semester overseas, internal struggles occurred in his department forcing him to change to a major that he did not want and thus, he pursued a doctorate in another field. Edward also founded a gang treatment and drug treatment center, which helped provide him with income to pay for his graduate work.

Adam's philosophy was similar to Earl's philosophy when he shared that getting a Ph.D. was not part of his thought process, but that through his motivation and guidance from family, he went ahead with it. He applied, but thought that his wife was not going to be supportive. However, he sought his wife's advice and she said if that was what he wanted to do, she would support him. When he was accepted, he shared the news with his wife. "I don't know whether she was real glad or not," Adam said. "She kind of shouted at me, 'Oh really, we're going to have to move?'" By her being supportive, Adam believes that it helped to motivate him to complete the doctorate because his wife who has a professional career had to sacrifice her career at the time in order for his family to move to another state for him to complete the degree. He recalls:

> We had three small kids—one was three at the time and the other one was five or six. Anyway, she just believed in me and said if this is something you want to do, I'll support it.

He said that his wife knew that he had been frustrated in his other jobs, as he describes below:

> She knew that as Black men, we often get pushed aside or beat around. I don't want to sound so sad about it, but I believe that because she saw the way that I wasn't being treated in the workplace, she knew that this was something that I wanted to do, and was willing to, basically, be the person to hold us financially

while I went to school. Of course, I worked part-time while working on the degree. In addition to God, prayer, and faith, I was able to do it because of my wife's support. As a result of moving my family to another state, I had no choice but to succeed. I mean it would be a shame for me to move my family away from our entire family just so I could fail? And then just so we can just live and I work in another place just like I was working before. That wasn't an option. I knew that whenever I got down or whenever so to speak, I just knew that it wasn't about me only, it was about my family. I couldn't let my family down. I had to go through it. I never thought about quitting. I drew on prayer and my wife's support. That's why I decided to stay and make sure I graduated.

Adam shed some insight into what the other research participants seemed to imply, when he said,

> When you get down, you need somebody to be able to say, 'Oh man, get over it. You can do it.' If you have a wife, which I'm blessed to have one—if I hadn't, I might not have felt a responsibility probably to complete the doctorate. But, it wasn't about me. It was about my family as well. It was about their needs and not only my needs.

Adam confessed that while working on the doctorate, he concluded that the best thing to do while pursuing the degree is to not work. But, it was understandable if one had to work. "Just do the best you can while you're doing it," Adam said. "Don't get hung up on the fact that as a Black man that somebody's always out to get you. You've got to overcome that as much as possible." Adam stressed that it was not good for

African-American men to show this attitude in their relationships with professors, peer relationships, or their work, as he notes, below:

> You want to be able to meet people so they can see you as a person as opposed to a Black man. Now, they are going to see you as a Black man, but when you write, you don't want them to attack you.

In sum, the examples given show that almost all of the research participants identified a family member or multiple family members as being motivating forces for them to complete the doctorate. These research participants identified various family members who served as motivating forces including parents, one parent only, grandparents, one grandparent only, siblings, and/or spouse.

Mentors as Motivators

In addition to family members, most of the research participants identified mentors as being a second interpersonal relationship motivator to complete the doctorate. The mentors identified were either an integral part of the doctoral program or university such as the doctoral committee chair or a faculty member, or outside the university community, like a friend or colleague who had experienced earning a doctorate or a mentor who just seemed to give advice at strategic times in the life of the research participant. In addition, fraternal organizations, dissertation support groups, and/or other organizations were identified as motivators for degree completion.

Personal Mentors

The Case of Charles.

Concerning the vital role of mentors, such as the doctoral committee chair or a faculty member in the doctoral program or university, in motivating the men to complete

the doctorate, Charles believed that he could not have achieved a doctorate without a personal mentor. “You need someone to help you navigate the political lauders of getting a doctorate,” Charles said. “You have to have someone who supports you, someone who is interested in your ideas.”

The Case of Samson.

Going into more depth, Samson revealed how “fortunate and blessed” he was to have several mentors in his life. He placed these mentors into four categories: 1) professional mentors, 2) spiritual mentors, 3) family/close friend mentors, and 4) mentors who in passing, give advice and look out for one’s best interest. Focusing on his professional mentors, Samson revealed that all of his professional mentors mostly had terminal degrees and served in roles such as professors, doctors, or lawyers. He recalls:

> They have always told me that getting the terminal degree is the calling card to walk through any door that you ultimately want to walk through in life. Very early on in life, I decided that I wanted to get my calling card. The terminal degree, for me, was my calling card to get to my ultimate goal in life, which was to become a college president. It was the most that I could do, educationally, to attain my goals and I felt that once I got there, there was no stopping me.

The Case of Adam.

Like Samson, Adam identified his mentor, who was a professor and a motivating force for Adam to complete the doctorate. This professor, who Adam thought of very highly as a faculty instructor and as a person to assess Adam’s character, was the first person to encourage him to pursue the Ph.D. “I felt like he was very important to just give me that initial installation of hope and that’s all I needed,” Adam said. No one in

Adam's family had encouraged him to consider pursuing a Ph.D. Program and no one in his family had a doctorate.

Adam described another professional mentor who served as his dissertation chair, and who he felt had done a good job working with him. "I was very skeptical of her because I had her in one class and I didn't know where she was coming from," Adam said. "I just didn't know whether she liked people of color, but I didn't know for sure." Adam shared how one of the African-American professors said to him that he needed to talk with this professor, who was to become his Chair, as he notes, below:

> She said that any of her students will finish—'and they will finish on time.' So I talked to her and she asked me why I wanted her to be my dissertation chair? And I told her that I had another person in mind, and although she was very nice and a very sociable person, she wasn't a researcher. And so, I told her, I need a researcher and you're good. I want the best—I just think you're the best. That perked her ears up and then I said, 'I want to make sure I succeed and I'm seeking your support.' She was on board and right after that she said, 'OK, this is what we need to do.' She had a plan.

Adam revealed that his Chair had him to prepare a plan. He visited her office weekly and at other times bi-weekly. When doing research, he had to write about the kind of research he had done. He recalled an instance when he had to write an introduction and how she responded by saying to him, "that doesn't quite get it" or telling him to write it again. "She gave me some pointers of what was missing out of it," Adam said.

Turning to another category of mentors for Adam, he confided that his pastor, who was about 20 years older than he was, also was a mentor for him. Adam and his

pastor were jogging one morning together and his pastor knew he was taking the "comps." When they were jogging along, the pastor asked him how he had done on his exam and Adam responded that he failed the exam. The pastor's response to Adam was that he needed to pass the next time. Adam told him that he only had one more time. "Well," the pastor said, "you better do it." Adam appreciated how the pastor didn't dwell on the story. "He didn't allow me to wallow and feel sorry for myself," Adam said. "So, I felt—OK, I can do it next time."

The Case of Edward.

Edward, who was influenced in a similar manner like Samson and Adam, shared how his first Doctoral Committee Chair was not assertive with the committee to help move Edward through the doctoral committee process maze. However, when he got another Chair who looked like him, this new Chair got him through. At the time, Edward had already finished writing his dissertation pretty much and the Chair helped him in the editing phase. "He was that person that said, 'No, he's going to finish,'" Edward said.

The Case of Marcus.

From a related perspective, Marcus shared that the counselor that he had when he got his Ph.D. was very supportive and helped him through the doctoral process. Marcus, who ultimately achieved a second doctorate, confessed that his highest frustration was in his pursuit of the D.Min. "I thought about quitting because I had already received my Ph.D., but, I had come too far," Marcus said. At the end of this Program, one of Marcus' professors counseled him and shared that it was alright to think about quitting, but not to think about it long. "That stuck with me," Marcus said who revealed that the professor had placed weight and value on how far Marcus had come in the Program and the fact

that he virtually had completed everything except writing the dissertation. The professor encouraged him to complete the dissertation.

The Case of Gary.

Gary believed that he was an above average writer and also reflected on how he had been motivated to complete the doctorate by one of his mentors. He recalled that from the time that he was in secondary school, he used to win writing contests school-wide, get invited to young authors competitions, and had always had a knack for writing. As Gary moved through his undergraduate program and when he got to his master's program, he was mentored by an African-American woman who had full confidence in his abilities and who became his first mentor in the academic setting. "I just blossomed under her tutelage," Gary said. Gary's mentor advised him to start writing his papers tied to the identified theme for his dissertation, which motivated him to complete the doctorate. Reflecting upon his doctoral program, Gary explained that writing seminars were offered twice each semester, and that his mentor pressured him to attend, which he did. "It was a research oriented program," Gary said. "Those expectations were out there and I was the second Black to graduate from my university in two years out of many, many Blacks," Gary said.

The Case of Percy.

Not only were Samson, Adam, Edward, Marcus, and Gary influenced by faculty members to complete the doctorate, but Percy talked about his dissertation chair's effect on him, as he describes, below:

> Along the way, he was always trying to get me involved with things. He was trying to get me to do research with him. He always encouraged me to read

through some articles that he was working on and he would, periodically after I would go back and do some revisions and add some things, put my name on some of the articles.

Percy entered the profession full-time and viewed his Chair as being very helpful. "He got me engaged in professional associations," Percy said, "and in cases where he was going out to present, he would stick my name on presentations, invite me along, and nominate me for membership on standing committees in those associations."

The Case of Ronal.

Ronal was reared in rural areas of the southwestern U.S. and he attended high school, earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in the same region. Obtaining a high school diploma was emphasized in his family, however, some family and friends didn't understand why he wanted to pursue the doctorate. Ronal was an active member of his church where he acquired some support, and his wife served as a base of support for him in completing the doctorate.

Ronal's experiences with his Doctoral Committee Chair impacted how he thought about completing the doctorate. He was afraid to complete the degree. Not only did Ronal have the fear of failing to complete the doctorate, but he recalled that he knew at least nine or 10 other people that because of that fear, had not completed their doctoral programs. "They are really afraid of the dissertation," Ronal said. "That fear is planted in some cases, but just because of timing, I had the right Chair to help me through my fears." Ronal had started on doctoral coursework, but dropped out of the program for a while. He remembers:

> I was fortunate that the second go-round, I had an excellent Chair to help direct me through that maze. I don't know if you want to call it a maze, but it is a maze and I was directed and I learned how to navigate the maze.

Ronal continued by recalling the support at his university. The university had a program whereby a counselor (who happened to be a white male) was available, was in tune with the doctoral process, and wanted to help the doctoral students. He recalls:

> I don't even think he got paid for it; he did this on his own. He urged anybody who wanted to have support through the dissertation stage to join this group, which consisted of about eight people and met once per week. "I went to the group and just loved the way he presented himself in the group," Ronal said. The group was comprised of individuals from many disciplines, according to Ronal. The counselor had each doctoral student to focus on their goals and each week would ask individuals to share what they were working on or what phase they were in. "We would say, 'I'm just trying to gather data, reading literature, in the writing stage, or have writer's block,'" Ronal said, "and he would explain what we were going through." Group members were able to share how they had been able to overcome certain experiences and the professor suggested other tips for the students to try. The feedback from the group and the professor were helpful, according to Ronal. The next week group members would report what they had done or not done. Ronal noted:

> You felt a responsibility to the group to succeed. You didn't want to look bad in reporting that you did good and you didn't, and you didn't want to look bad to say, 'I didn't do anything, or goofed off, or procrastinated.' So, it really motivated you to want to go to the next level.

Ronal noted how group members would share how they overcame obstacles and how he felt support from the interaction.

In sum, a number of the research participants were motivated by mentors, who were an essential component of the doctoral program or university. These mentors, who consisted of Doctoral Committee Chairs or faculty members, influenced these research participants to complete the doctorate.

Friends/Colleagues

Like the mentors who were a vital part of the doctoral program or university who influenced many of the research participants to complete the doctorate, a number of the research participants mentioned their being influenced by additional mentors, who were situated outside the university community. These mentors were friends or colleagues, who had earned doctorates or were individuals who just seemed to give timely advice in the life of the research participants. These mentors were motivating forces for research participants to complete the doctorate.

The Cases of Blair and Samson.

Blair stressed how he had gained insight through the challenges and through the experiences of his mentors. Like Blair, Samson looked at his friends as being a motivating force in his completing the doctorate and shared that his cadre of friends had gone on to become successful and that the career paths taken by his friends and himself were somewhat parallel, as he describes, below:

> They're in executive level positions in their respective fields. We've always been competitive—competitive not from the sense that it's a detriment, but healthy competition. If I would make an A, that would drive them to make an A. When I

would complete a course, it would drive them to complete a course. And so, through healthy competition, we motivated each other.

The Case of Percy.

Percy also had a friend who was mentor to him in addition to his Doctoral Committee Chair. “My first job in higher education came about as a result of him,” Percy said. “He hired me as the Graduate Assistant in his office and made it possible for me to complete my doctorate.” When Percy applied for the program, he admitted that he went in blindly. He didn’t have connections around the campus regarding possible sources of funding. But, mid-way through his master’s degree, he applied for a position in his friend’s office. He said to Percy, “well, as such, we want someone who is going to be here for a while and just because you’re dealing with certification and it takes a year or so to learn, we realize that you are very close to finishing your master’s. With that in mind, if you are willing to take this job, we would be willing to pay for your doctorate just to keep you around.” Percy credits his friend with helping to finance his doctorate.

The Case of Ronal.

Ronal, whose experience was a bit different, said that as he talked to people who were working on doctorates or completing doctorates or had doctorates, they would talk to him about someone that was widely known that had influenced them. He shared that they would indicate that they wanted to be like Frederick Douglas or someone the world knows. Reflecting back on who had influenced him, Ronal said, “For me, it was people that you never heard of—just every day, average people that made little hints or said little things that stuck in your mind.” Ronal recalled a gentleman who was visiting him after he had his bachelor’s degree who said, ‘you know, one day you will be Dr.’

> I never thought of it, thought it was impossible, and thought I should forget it. But, that just kept plaguing at me. And then, I had other just every day individuals, common people, that made those kinds of statements to me. Every time something would happen, that would just come back to me.

Most of the peer pressure was negative and most of Ronal's supervisors were not really supportive. Ronal talked about how they didn't have a baccalaureate degree, but they were "high on the totem poll" at work. Ronal revealed that he had to navigate through that and continue to work toward his goal. "My goal was to continue school and learn," Ronal said. He thought that the only way he was successful was by modeling how when he took off early from work and went to classes, he would benefit his organization. The organization was benefiting as much as Ronal was from his perspective.

Earl, Gary, and Samson were influenced by friends who served as mentors like those mentioned above. Earl learned from a friend who was a professor, while Gary and Samson were influenced positively by role models that were outside of the academic arena.

As indicated above, many of the research participants were motivated to complete the doctorate by mentors who were friends or colleagues who had earned doctorates or were mentors who just seemed to give advice at strategic times in the lives of the research participants. Like the mentors, who were a vital part of the doctoral program or university personnel who influenced many of the research participants, these additional mentors situated outside the university community, motivated the men to complete the doctorate.

Fraternal Organizations and/or Other Organizations

Friends, fraternal organizations, and/or other organizations were identified as other interpersonal relationship motivators to complete the doctorate. This category was cited as a motivator in addition to the interpersonal relationship motivation of family members and mentors. This mentor group included those who were outside the university community like a friend or colleague who had experienced earning a doctorate, a fraternal organization member who had completed the doctorate, or a mentor who just seemed to give advice at strategic times in the life of the research participant.

The Case of Charles.

Charles shared that he was a member of a fraternity that had achievement as its top goal and that this goal was embedded in him. He recalls:

> Even before I was a member of the fraternity, I was a Black person in America. 'Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud.' That kind of stuff from James Brown when I was a teenager is the little stuff that motivates me today. I love our heritage and our culture. I'm a transmitter of it.

The Case of Larenz.

Larenz had friends who served as mentors, and like Charles, was motivated to complete the doctorate through interpersonal relationships he developed with members of his fraternity. "Friends are very important to me and I think that I am a good friend too," Larenz said. "I think that if you want friendship, you have to have the ability to be a good friend." He confessed that sometimes the challenges were overwhelming and that he felt like he could just quit, as he describes, below:

> God always sent me a friend to say, 'don't stop man. It ain't nothin' out here in these streets.' Those friends were very important to me. I feel like I owe so many people a piece of my degree whether mentors or friends.

Larenz spoke of his fraternity and the principles by which its members were guided including manhood, scholarship, perseverance, and uplift. "Through those principles, I live my life," he said. Larenz stressed that it was the reinforcement that he received from his brotherhood was what helped him. Larenz identified a mentor, who was a member of his fraternity, who he had developed a personal relationship with and who had helped him to complete the doctorate. The mentor happened to be the President of his university and was the first person that he actually felt like he could idolize because he was successful outside of a sports figure. "He allowed me to embrace some of his wealth," Larenz said. This mentor helped Larenz to travel to attend some fraternity conferences where he met many fraternity brothers who were doing productive things in their lives. Larenz realized that he could get an education and pursue a professional job. It became apparent to him that he did not have to be a "garbage man" and did not have to settle for a "local job at the factory. I can be like one of these brothers," Larenz said.

The Case of Edward.

Similar to the experiences of Charles and Larenz, Edward, who was motivated to complete the doctorate by his Doctoral Committee Chair, was also motivated by participation in an organization as its national president. "We had a chance to interact with other brothers and sisters who were dealing with the same problems at white universities across the country," Edward said. The organization met quarterly and sponsored a national conference, Edward continued. "You had other people who were

doing research with you," Edward said. "I had very good support from some individuals who had nothing to do with academics," Edward said.

For some research participants, fraternal organizations and/or other organizations were identified as producing additional mentors who motivated them to complete the doctorate. In summary, interpersonal relationships served as a motivator for many research participants to complete the doctorate. Whether the interpersonal relationship was established with a parent, grandparent, sibling, or spouse, these individuals served as motivators for the research participants, through their interpersonal relationships with the research participants. In addition, mentors who were an important part of the doctoral program or university, such as the doctoral committee chair or a faculty member, or mentors from outside the university community, such as a friend or colleague who had experienced earning a doctorate, and mentors, who just seemed to give advice at strategic times in the lives of research participants, served as motivators for the research participants.

Professional Goal/Achievement

The third theme, professional goal/achievement, focused on research participants' desire to become part of the higher learning community. Some research participants were motivated by the encouragement they received at the bachelor's and master's degree levels, while others were motivated by their drive for professional educational advancement, teaching in the college setting, and/or reaching the academic milestone of completing the doctorate to credential them in an area of expertise. Each of these sources of motivation will be given some attention in the paragraphs that follow.

Encouragement Received at Bachelor's and Master's Levels

The desire by some participants to become part of the higher learning community was sparked by the encouragement they received at the bachelor's and master's degree levels. This encouragement and/or inspiration received resulted in motivating some of the research participants to complete the doctorate.

The Case of Earl.

Two friends of Earl inspired him to complete his master's degree, which he completed at the same university where he later completed the doctorate. A doctorate for Earl meant not only access to interfacing with intellectuals from diverse backgrounds, but the degree also gave him an opportunity to present papers and to help other individuals progress through the undergraduate and graduate levels. "I am not only a leader, but I am one of the individuals to let them know that they can accomplish the same thing that I have done," Earl said. Providing some insight into the context of his education, Earl revealed that he did not see very many Blacks in Science and was inspired to do his dissertation in that area, as he describes, below:

> I found that the reading material that shows Blacks in math and science was not there. One of the motivators for me to do that dissertation on the topic was an experience I had teaching at a majority Black high school. The students came to me in disarray.

Earl was shown a textbook where only one paragraph was printed about Blacks. "It was about slavery and it did not show the accomplishments of Blacks," Earl said. He pointed out how this instance sparked negativity since the only thing Black students heard about was slavery. "So, with that, I went on to get my doctorate and focused on

African Americans from a contextual and written point in physical science textbooks," Earl said.

The Case of Percy.

Percy recalls:

> Even after I considered getting an MBA, he (mentor) said, 'even though you may not be in the College of Education, we still want you here. We want you to help us. Complete your MBA.' He (mentor) went out and talked to the Dean of the College and said, 'OK, even though this guy is not in the College of Education, I want him here.' He gave me quite a bit of opportunities to serve in his stead.

In summary, the outcome of encouragement and/or inspiration was completion of the doctorate for these research participants. The encouragement and/or inspiration that they received at the bachelor's and master's degree levels ignited and became the catalyst for these research participants to become part of the higher learning community.

Professional Educational Advancement, College Teaching, and/or Attaining the Academic Milestone of the Doctorate for Credentialing

These motivators were identified as additional to the encouragement and/or inspiration that the research participants received at the bachelor's and master's degree levels, which led to doctorate completion and increasing the research participants' ability to become part of the higher learning community. Other research participants were motivated by their drive for professional educational advancement, teaching in the college setting, and/or reaching the academic milestone of completing the doctorate to credential them in an area of expertise.

The Cases of James, Charles, and Edward.

For James, obtaining the master's degree was fine, "But, I couldn't teach at the college level," James said. James wanted to affect the people coming into and working in human service agencies. He not only wanted to get the doctorate for professional educational advancement, but he wanted to pursue a career in the academy, as he notes, below:

> It is just something about the classroom environment. As one of my professors going through the doctoral program stated, 'education stems from the Latin word, *educure*, which means to pull out of what is already there.' So, it is a game of cat and mouse. It is like you are trying to pull something, but I am trying to pull something from you at the same time. Who is going to pull the most? Are you going to pull a better student or am I going to pull something you hadn't planned to talk about? I just love that game. I just love it! It is energizing.

James confided that he enjoyed the writing process and the research process, as he describes, below:

> It is my humble belief that the differences in education are a significant contributor to our socio-economic status in this country. So, if I am able to contribute one article that might spark something inside someone else to make them want to make a change, then I am contributing to the body of knowledge. Unfortunately, titles seem to socially define folk. It has always been my belief that it is the person that makes the title. It is not the title that makes the person.

Like James, Charles was motivated to advance professionally in education and shared how he believed that a Ph.D. was honorable. Charles, who was employed by a

non-profit organization, was responsible for community development programs such as Black-on-Black crime prevention and teen pregnancy prevention. “It seems that we understood the problem in the field, however, the university had all of the problem-solving resources there,” Charles said. Charles commented that these resources were not getting to the “front lines” of what was needed and he saw a need to bridge the gap between what higher education and the resources to solve problems could do for front-line organizations such as neighborhood associations, mentoring groups, and other prevention groups that were trying to solve social problems.

Edward joined James and Charles in their motivation to complete the doctorate to advance professionally in the education arena and in getting equipped to teach in the college setting. He understood that based on the American education system, attaining the doctorate was a key to access for inclusion in certain circles because of the status associated with the degree, as Edward notes, below:

> I knew that once I had the Ph.D. when I write or say certain things, whether qualified or not, people will see me as qualified because I have the Ph.D. My theory, which has been proven since I finished, was that once you have a Ph.D., you would be surprised at the number of people who will ask you to come and serve on committees and put you in policy making roles. I have always wanted to be at a high level where I can make policies that would affect large numbers of people instead of just individuals. The Ph.D. has given me accessibility.

Samson also pursued the degree in order to pursue a career in the academy.

The Case of Adam.

Adam echoed Charles' view by stating, "People with doctorates have a high level of respect because they are considered experts in their field of study." Adam confessed that he wanted to be set apart, and in order to do that, he needed to reach the highest level with anything he did whether it was to "write a book or get a job." Adam expressed that he thought the doctorate would place him at a higher income level and would pacify him automatically with more money. For Adam, that is what happened and as soon as he achieved the doctorate, his income increased. "The Lord boosted my income at least by $50,000 just because of that Ph.D.," Adam said with a big smile on his face.

The Case of Marcus.

In addition to the other research participants who were motivated to complete the doctorate to advance educationally, pursue work in the college setting, and/or simply to reach the academic milestone of the doctorate, Marcus shared how getting a doctorate was important to him from a professional standpoint. In the cases of his two doctoral degrees, it was a requirement of the job for which Marcus served for one doctorate and in his other role in the ministry, the doctorate was necessary to be competent. He recalls:

> It was a necessity in both professions because we are judged highly on our capabilities of competence and people are asking more questions related to my profession and the concepts of those things. People question you more. They don't accept what you say because you are the leader, so now you must have a ready answer and understanding for yourself to be able to provide guidance to people, not to your particular discipline, but so that they can have a clear understanding to seek for themselves the direction that they can go.

Marcus stated that his vocation required him to continue his education and keep his license current. He stressed that if his field of study was going to be beneficial to those who are seeking to change their lives and if he was to be effective, it was critical for him to be competent in the work experience and in the knowledge of theories and theologies. Marcus stressed the need to continually transform because of changes in the field on a daily basis with regard to problems and stresses, as he notes, below:

> That, in itself, tells you that we are under the influences of external pressures that cause us to have severe depressions. The suicide rate is increasing and children are acting out. So, one must continually advance in the competence level to be able to help people today.

Three other research participants pursued the doctorate for professional advancement. Gary believed that the degree would work for him, while Blair believed that the terminal degree would translate into career advancement, and Ronal believed in education for advancement.

Several research participants were motivated to complete the doctorate by their goal of advancing in education professionally, teaching in the college setting and/or reaching an academic milestone of completing the doctorate. This achievement issued them the key needed to access the tools for these African-American men to teach in the college setting, conduct research to equip them for service in the academic arena and outside community, and/or to advance in administrative roles in the university setting.

In summary, this third theme of professional goal/achievement of the doctorate targets the research participants' desire to become part of the higher learning community. For some, motivation to complete the degree was sparked by the encouragement they

received at the bachelor's and master's degree stages. For others, the motivation evolved from many of the research participants' push for professional educational advancement, desire to work in varying areas in the university setting, and/or yearning to become equipped and credentialed to serve their community,

Community Service as a Motivation to Complete the Doctorate

The fourth theme, community service, functioned like a bowl holding multiple types of fruit with diverse motivations for completing the doctorate. Being equipped for the opportunities that would be available upon doctoral completion including a possible higher income potential and/or better quality of life were motivations to complete the doctorate. The dimensions of community service that will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow include the research participants' belief that the doctorate equipped them to help the community at-large, and their belief that they would be able to use what they had learned to solve social problems specifically in the African-American community.

Equipping Educationally for Community Service

Being equipped for the opportunities that would be available upon doctoral completion including a possible higher income potential and/or better quality of life were specific motivations to complete the doctorate.

The Cases of Blair, Edward, and Samson.

Blair, whose career has been dedicated to the public sector, was an individual who achieved the doctorate because of its value in helping him engage in community service. "My career has focused on public, post-secondary education," Blair said, "which translates to serving on college campuses that are state schools, not private schools."

Blair shared how his background in public policy was a second attribute needed in his profession in higher education and used a scenario in a court of law to illustrate, below:

> When someone wants to make a strong case, they always say that they have a list of witnesses. The first criterion to be a credible witness is to be a subject matter witness, which means that whatever the case may be, you want to show that a person has the credentials, which would include academic credentials to serve as an authority. In order to be an authority on something, you want to demonstrate two things—that you have the credential and experience. One must possess the terminal degree. You certainly want to capture that in order to have credibility or to provide the testimony.

For Blair, the definition of community starts with family. He continued:

> If you're not taking care of your family, you can't tell me you are serving the community. The ability to provide for my family and then in a broader way, my extended family and my community at large, which goes into the whole notion of serving the public sector and with that there's something in that for me.

Sharing his view about career advancement, Blair said that as one goes up the scale in positions, more money is acquired. Blair likened career advancement to giving back respect to fore-bearers by recognizing their hard work, and he stressed how he thought it was wrong not to take advantage of education after others have fought so hard for those following behind them to get an education, as he notes, below:

> All you have to do is walk through the door because a tremendous opportunity waits. That door should be education. You didn't have to fight for it. They didn't have to fight for it, but they did. They did it because they wanted to see us do

better and for us not to take advantage of the access they provided, would be atrocious.

Like Blair, Edward's main reason for getting the doctorate was to do more in the community service arena. He had earned a master's degree in the business field at a university located in the northeast United States. At the time, Edward was 24 years old, had many job offers, and thought it was time that he should be making money by doing something great. "I founded a gang treatment center, a drug treatment center, and a company to do some different work to bring income so that I would be able to do my dissertation and help pay for my graduate work," Edward said. Edward needed the doctorate for the credentialing purposes to continue his community service.

Samson shared the views of Blair and Edward in that he wanted a job that would allow him to give back to the community whether he achieved a terminal degree or not. "I have always enjoyed reading and I have always enjoyed reading research, quite honestly, about African Americans and their respective plights in life," Samson said. He revealed that his desire was to contribute to the knowledge base of what people think about African Americans and to help dispel some of the myths that exist about them.

The Case of Larenz.

For Larenz, who was active in a fraternity, continuing the community service for which his fraternity engaged was important. In addition, because of his great respect for mentors in his fraternity, Larenz was driven to complete the doctorate. The fraternity was the connection for Larenz with community service because he didn't have anyone in his family with the degree. "That's why the fraternity just gave me that foundation and

helped me develop some principles for myself, which included community service," Larenz said.

Some research participants' gave examples to support their beliefs that the doctorate equipped them to help the community at-large. They emphasized the importance of being equipped for varying opportunities that would become available to them upon completion of the doctorate. Motivations to complete the degree would result in opportunities like a possible higher income potential and/or better quality of life.

Solving Social Problems

Being equipped for the opportunities that would be available upon doctoral completion including a possible higher income potential and/or better quality of life was one motivation to complete the doctorate identified by many research participants. In addition, the education gained from academic pursuits could be used to solve social problems specifically in the African-American community, a perspective that is shared by the researcher because of the researcher's belief that achieving the doctorate for this type of purpose is both honorable and desperately needed in today's time.

The Case of Charles.

For Charles, the opportunity to engage in community service was his #1 reason for seeking the terminal degree in higher education. With a master's degree, Charles was working at a community non-profit organization and was responsible for community development programs. Charles thought that people were graduating from college and going to work in social agencies unprepared, as he describes, below:

> They had book knowledge, but not enough knowledge about how things worked in the community. They could talk the hood language, but they couldn't talk the

> Board Room language and, they could understand the Board Room process, but they couldn't apply it to the neighborhood. The number one priority right now is that we must connect what we are doing.

Charles spoke of how efforts are made to prepare health professionals (i.e. professional therapists, counselors, and case managers) to work with people who are dually diagnosed or who have co-occurring issues. He cited those who might have an addiction to substance abuse and might be depressed or psychotic or have post traumatic stress disorder. He stressed the need to prepare schools of social work, teacher education programs, and other programs that prepare people to go into the classroom and the community. "A big gap still exists," Charles said, as he continued:

> All my friends were rooting for me—my former teachers and people that had written me recommendations to get accepted into the program. What was I to do? Get accepted and then drop out? Say it was too tough? I'm already a Black male. No—I wasn't going to have that.

For Charles, getting the doctorate was a professional goal for him and it was inspired by engaging in community service. He recalls:

> My people were slaves in this country, kidnapped, and stolen out of Africa and we were told we were inferior and so I had to prove to myself and to others that we are not an inferior species and that Black men are not an endangered group of people. We are strong and some of us are warriors.

This fourth motivating theme to complete the doctorate, community service, encompassed being equipped to take advantage of the opportunities that would be available upon doctoral completion with an outcome of a higher income and/or better

quality of life. In addition, this category included the concept that the doctorate equipped and increased the research participants' ability to lead in the community at-large since the knowledge gained in their doctoral education pursuits could be used to help solve social problems in their communities, especially in African-American communities.

Summary

The findings of this research study regarding motivation could be categorized into four themes, the first of which identified the pursuit of the degree as a source of inspiration. This category encompassed spiritual activities of most of the research participants, which served as a means of support for them to persevere through doctoral study and complete the doctorate. Others identified their love for learning and/or their desire to take advantage of individual strengths as aspects of motivation to achieve the doctorate.

The second theme that arose as a motivation to complete the degree was the inspiration gained from interpersonal relationships while the desire for professional goal achievement was identified as a third theme. Turning to interpersonal relationships, the family and/or mentors were the sources of the two greatest interpersonal relationships revealed as motivators to complete the doctorate. Almost all of the research participants identified a family member or multiple family members as being a motivating force for their degree completion. The family members identified included parents, one parent only, grandparents, one grandparent only, siblings, and/or spouse. In addition to family members, most of the research participants identified mentors as being a second interpersonal relationship motivator. The mentors identified were either an integral part of the doctoral program or university such as the doctoral committee chair or a faculty

member. Or, the mentors were from outside the university community like a friend or colleague who had experienced earning a doctorate or a mentor who gave advice at strategic times in the life of the research participant. Additionally, friends, fraternal organizations, and/or dissertation support groups were identified as other interpersonal relationship motivators for research participants to complete the doctorate.

Professional goal/achievement, the third theme, focused on research participants' desire to become part of the higher learning community. Some research participants were motivated by the encouragement they received at the bachelor's and master's degree levels, while others were motivated by their drive for professional educational advancement, teaching in the college setting, and/or reaching the academic milestone of completing the doctorate to credential them in an area of expertise.

The fourth theme, centering on the interest in various dimensions of community service, covered getting equipped to take advantage of the opportunities that would be available upon doctoral completion with an outcome of a higher income and/or better quality of life. This category included the concept that the doctorate equipped and increased the research participants' capability to lead in the community at-large since the knowledge gained in their doctoral education pursuits could be used to help solve social problems in their communities with emphasis in African-American communities.

The challenges that these men confronted while pursuing the degree will be addressed in chapter five, and will offer some additional insight into the motivation of these African-American men to complete the doctorate.

CHAPTER FIVE: FACING THE CHALLENGES OF DOCTORAL STUDY

To gain further insight into the motivation of these African-American men to complete the doctorate, this research study focused also on the challenges that confronted these students. Accordingly, their identification of the challenges helped the researcher to better understand the motivation of these men to complete the doctorate. Four themes regarding challenges associated with completing the doctorate surfaced. The first theme concerned the financial pressure that arose from engaging in a doctoral program, while the second theme focused on the time management that was necessary to balance a doctoral program and other commitments of the doctoral student. Doctoral program-related matters were identified as a third theme and professorial matters emerged as the fourth theme. The research participants' response to each of these themes helped to reveal motivators for these men to complete the doctorate. Each of these themes will be discussed and illustrated in the paragraphs ahead.

Financial Pressure

Financial pressure was a challenge for most of the research participants. These African-American men were faced with trying to balance prior financial commitments like family responsibilities and work commitments, with the additional expenses that accompanied doctoral study. Most of them felt that their family was forced to bear the strain either through the efforts of their spouses who had to assume some of the financial overage or by themselves being placed under the physical pressure of working and pursuing the doctorate simultaneously. In most instances, these men were burdened financially and/or physically, and their families shared in the burden until the degree was completed. The cost of tuition, money for living expenses, and funds to cover the cost of

gas when commuting to a higher education institution were cited as elements of the financial pressure.

Cost of Tuition as Financial Pressure

Financial pressure was experienced by many of the research participants due to the cost of tuition costs and related financial costs for academic materials, which will be explored in the following paragraphs.

The Cases of Larenz and Samson.

Larenz revealed that tuition was his first battle in getting the doctorate. Once he got tuition covered, Larenz was concerned about how he was going to pay rent and maintain his food expenses, light, internet, and cable bills. Larenz also identified as vital needing funds for a social life, as noted, below:

> You want to buy some clothes and you want to go out every now and then. You want to afford recreation, but a lot of times, I couldn't afford membership to a health club. And so, money was always an issue.

Larenz recalled how he tried to do something for his son even though his family did not pressure him to do so. "At Christmas time, it was just a burden all the way through," Larenz said. "But, I feel blessed now that I can shout how I made it over. It was a struggle." Larenz's financial picture was a bit different from some of the other research participants because he went into his doctoral program with a scholarship. However, the scholarship failed to fully fund his education and thus, Larenz shared how each semester was a burden and how he asked himself each term how he was going to get the money, as described, below:

> I've been blessed to always have something to come through for me, but it always seemed like it was a challenge from semester to semester and the longer I stayed in the program, the harder it got to maintain that sense of security from the financial point of view to pay for school.

There was always something that had to be paid. Larenz revealed that the scholarship paid for a portion of his expenses, but that he had to come up with sometimes 10%, 20%, or higher. He confessed that he was in debt now because he had to take out student loans.

For Samson, finances were a challenge because he was trying to avoid taking out multiple student loans. He spent his savings on tuition and confessed that he probably lived his poorest during his doctoral study days because he did not take out what he considered a large amount of student loans. He is paying back the loans now. "When you look at what you get for it," Samson said, "it's worth the investment."

The Cases of Earl and Marcus.

Earl, who was working in a full-time job, was divorced, but had a family, revealed how other students (majority, non-Black) who Earl noticed were in the loop received the graduate scholarships, while Blacks did not. It became a financial burden for Earl from the standpoint of credit card debt and a magnificent loan upon graduation and although Earl borrowed only $14,000, it took a long time to pay off the debt.

Finally, Marcus, like many of the other research participants, seemed frustrated by the financial pressure and was suspicious of the motives behind them, as noted, below:

> They were more interested, I think, in the money than the benefit of the student. I think it got to the point where they were not compassionate enough to see what the program really needed to help people get through.

Marcus explained that doctoral students had to pay for a full course load each semester, as described, below:

> You couldn't say, 'I'm only going to use so many hours, so I'll pay for the amount of hours used.' So, it was very costly. It was costing me money and my particular concern was closure of that delta between what I spent and how much time I had to get this thing done.

Financial pressure was experienced by many of the research participants. This pressure was caused by the cost of tuition and finances needed to pay for academic materials. In addition, the financial pressure evolved since research participants were blessed on one hand by taking out student loans, but plagued on the other hand because of the time length required to pay the loans back.

Money for Living Expenses as Financial Pressure

Money for living expenses, including the funds needed to cover the cost of gas when commuting to a higher education institution were components of the financial pressure. These African-American men had to try balancing prior financial commitments like family responsibilities and work commitments, with the additional expenses that accompanied doctoral study. In most instances, their families bore the strain. Either the spouses of these men assumed some of the financial overage or the research participants were placed under the physical stress of working and pursuing the doctorate

simultaneously. The research participants, in most instances, were hampered financially and/or physically, and their families shared in the load until the degree was completed.

The Cases of Edward and Adam.

Edward wanted to complete the doctorate, but he confessed that he couldn't afford to quit work and attend school. He was unable to be a regular full-time student, which he said was what the university wanted. He had to go to school and work.

Adam's financial pressure was more severe than Edward's plight. Adam's wife was the only one working, especially when he was working on his dissertation, as described, below:

> I felt like I wasn't doing my part, contributing financially as I should as the head of the home, the male, the husband, the father. I felt like I should have stepped up and been able to make more money or just to provide.

Adam's wife did not think about it in this manner or worry about it, according to Adam, but it was in his mind and loaded him down. This personal pressure was exacerbated by comments that people Adam knew made periodically, which he got tired of hearing. Adam shared comments made like, 'Well, after you finish, are you going to be a permanent student? When are you going to finish? Wow, aren't you tired of your wife taking care of you?' Adam shared that he knew these people were not paying any of his bills, and that they were not trying to support him. He said that he had to realize that there would always be people trying to bring him down.

The Cases of Gary and Blair.

Gary found it difficult to provide for a family and attend school at the same time. Fortunately, he was the recipient of a scholarship, but, he and his family still struggled.

His family couldn't go to the home where their parents lived on some holidays because they couldn't afford it, which was a struggle that dampened his morale, he confessed.

Like Gary and others, Blair was challenged by the cost of financing his education while still trying to provide for his family, as noted, below:

> Education is not cheep. It's very expensive and if you have a family and you are trying to provide for your family, you need the minimum, acceptable requirements to try to finance your education, which was a challenge for me.

Part of the reason for this pressure was because Blair went to school full-time, which blocked him from applying for what he considered "serious jobs." Working in a part-time job while going to school full-time and stretching the financial resources was difficult for him.

The Case of Ronal.

Travel was a great challenge for Ronal because he had to drive 72 miles one-way to attend doctoral classes. He spent about three hours a day just commuting and he was going to campus a minimum of three days a week, as described below:

> When they had group meetings, I was there. Sometimes I was there five days a week and some weekends. So, it was a challenge for the travel and this was year-round. No matter what kind of weather, I was there. I very seldom ever missed class.

With the travel came the cost and the commuting was very expensive especially with the rising of gas prices at the time. In addition, it was necessary for Ronal to go through a transition in employment from one agency to another in order to complete the doctorate. His salary was paid from 'soft' money. He shared that he talked to the

executive director and told him of his situation, whereby he needed time to complete his doctorate, and needed the director's support. However, the executive director who only had an Associate's degree was against him completing the doctorate and told him that he could not support him. Ronal then talked to another gentleman who was a leader in another agency, but who had gotten a Ph.D. and understood Ronal's desire to get a doctorate. The problem was that he told Ronal that he would be supportive, but was only able to pay him about 50% of what Ronal was earning. So, Ronal had to make a decision regarding whether he was going to stay at his job and not complete the doctorate, or whether he was going to accept the new position that paid him less. Ronal took the new job, as described, below:

> When I left this other organization to accept the new position, we had enough to live on—chilly beans for a year (smile). But, if you know education, one year became two years. And, it was tough for two years. That's the first time in my whole college career that I took out a college loan or grant.

Ronal took out a loan because he said that the last year was more expensive than any year. "The cost was really, really challenging to me," Ronal said. "But, I had gone too far to quit and that was a motivation of my challenge to continue."

The Case of James.

For James, the financial challenge was tied to the burden his wife endured during his doctoral study pursuit since both were in the military. James was in active duty and had a GI bill so there were no financial concerns for school. However, for James who was a military spouse, there were several issues that his wife had to deal with since she was in the military in active duty. James and his spouse felt that her supervisor or commander

could have been more appreciative of what she was going through, according to James who revealed how his branch of military service prided itself in taking care of its families, as described, below:

> When she was actually presented with the orders to go to Iraq, we found out that there were two other people before her asked to go and they declined it. They were given an option. With her being the lowest rank in her office, she didn't have the option.

James' wife presented her case to her commander. At the time, they had a three-year-old child at home, James was finishing his doctoral studies, and they were living overseas with no family there to help them out. James' wife explained that her deployment was going to place more pressure on her husband and that she didn't want that to happen to him. James said that his wife didn't have a problem with serving her country, as described, below:

> Neither one of us did, but it was the time of it and the fact that there were other capable individuals who could go. The commander's response was 'well, I didn't tell him to get the degree.' Two weeks later, my wife was deployed to Iraq. You can imagine a very active three-year old at home, overseas with Dad, principal chief musician at the church, and any other waking moment, I was sitting at the computer. So, I'm just that more appreciative of my rib because it takes a strong woman to do what she did. She served, she came home, and she landed.
>
> James had almost completed his dissertation when his wife came back.

These African-American men felt the weight of financial problems while working on their doctorate. Money for living expenses, including the funds needed to cover the

cost of gas when commuting to a higher education institution, were components of the financial pressure. Balancing prior financial commitments like family responsibilities and work commitments with the additional expenses loaded one side of the scale with doctoral study on the other. In most instances, the research participants' families bore the strain. Either the spouses of these men assumed some of the financial excess or the research participants were placed under the physical stress of working and pursuing the doctorate simultaneously.

In sum, financial pressure was a challenge for many of the research participants. Essentially, the cost of tuition, money for living expenses, and funds to cover the cost of gas when commuting to a higher education institution were cited as the basics for the financial weight. These men, in most instances, were hindered financially and/or physically, and their families were forced to share in the financial burden until the degree was completed. This seemed to occur whether the research participant worked full-time and pursued the doctorate simultaneously or whether the research participant pursued the doctorate solely on a full-time basis.

Time Management

Time management was another challenge for almost all of the research participants. Different types of time pressures evolved including the triangular balance between family life, work, and school; the balance between doctoral study and social life; and simply having enough time to devote to studies, assignments, projects, etc. Lack of sleep and lack of vacations were revealed as outcomes of time management imbalances. How time management challenged these African-American men in various ways will be explored in the paragraphs ahead.

Balance between Family Life, Work, and School

Managing time by striking a balance between family life, work, and school was a major challenge for many of the research participants since it took discipline on their part. The anticipated outcome was achievement of the doctorate and thus, it was imperative that a balance between family life, work, and school be accomplished.

The Case of Marcus.

For Marcus, the doctoral program was centered on self-discipline, as noted, below:

> The class work is in short successions so you're not in the classroom environment as you would be under a normal undergrad or master's program. They give you a course of certain studies depending on your particular discipline. And then you are allowed a certain length of time or years to finish the doctorate including the writing of the doctoral program paper. Therefore, you have to set your time and your goals as to what you want to do, and you have to check off on those things.

Marcus found that there were many influences on his time. Working 40 hours a week, working in a second job, and with so many external influences that took up a lot of his time, it was hard for him to meet the many demands on his time. Marcus had planned to complete his dissertation within seven or eight months after he came out of the class work. But, he found that to be unrealistic. Marcus was also delayed completing his dissertation because of the complexity of the style of writing that was required in the university. Marcus believed the writing program to be antiquated. Furthermore, the software program that doctoral students were required to use was hard to find. Marcus

believed that the software program was unrealistic to use since Microsoft and other styles were more appropriate in his view, as noted, below:

> To find that particular program and to work within the confines of it was very difficult. It was not user friendly and it was hard to get professional people that understood it to type because they didn't work under any program like that. My wife, bless her heart, was skilled enough to work within the confines of it and do a lot. And, actually she did a lot of typing of my dissertation working with the program.

The Cases of Blair and Gary.

Blair echoed the frustration of Marcus in talking about time management as a challenge in completing the doctorate. His challenge was making sure he could devote adequate time to his family, which for him always ranked #1. "I put family before everything else, outside of God," Blair said. Gary, in contrast, talked about how time management was a challenge for him due to a work overload. "When I was a doctoral student, they worked me to death," Gary said. "I was there for two years, but in those two years, it went back to my writing propensity."

The Case of Edward.

Edward believed that pursuing the doctorate and the time management issues revolved around growing up. "You realize," Edward said, "that this is how the game is played and they have what I want." Edward stressed that to help with the balancing act a doctoral student needed to, for instance, get rid of some of their competing interests. "It doesn't look good for you to be a CEO of a company and still be a graduate student because the professors feel like you have more time with your company," Edward said.

To help his cause, Edward changed some of his profile by changing his e-mail to take off his company's name and he said that he tried to give his doctoral committee the impression that they were the most important people in his life.

The Case of Samson.

Samson, who worked full-time throughout his entire educational career, said that pursuing the doctorate became challenging regarding time since sometimes his work suffered and at other times, school suffered. His work never suffered to the extent that he got fired, but there were times when his boss had to call him in and indicate that Samson's productivity was not where it used to be or he could tell that Samson was in the final exam time because he might have seen him sleeping at his desk. Samson had night classes so he would work all day and then run home to make sure his son was OK. Sometimes, his son would go to class with him in the evenings. His classes were from 6:00-9:00 p.m. "By the time I got out, I had to get home, get ready for the next day, and be back at work for 7:30 a.m.," Samson said. So, this schedule became very challenging for him. At the time Samson pursued the doctorate, his program required a one-year residency. This meant that Samson had to be in school full-time, and he worked at the university where he was pursuing the doctorate. The university had a rule whereby a doctoral student could not be a full-time employee and be a full-time student. Thus, Samson had to drop down in his employment status to 50% so that he could be in school full-time, which meant that he had to take on another part-time job to make up for the money that he was losing by dropping down 50%. Samson gave up his weekends completely. The constant juggling was a challenge for him and probably what Samson believed made him get gray hairs early in life.

Samson noted that he often found himself struggling to be able to manage a schedule where he could work, parent, attend school, and study, as described, below:

> Something was always lacking. I think, as I look in retrospect, if I had actually taken a daily planner and planned my time out hour by hour, I think I could have been a little more effective, but I found myself staying up to 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. trying to get work done, then going to work not fully rested, tired, and then having to go to night class, tired.

Samson revealed that if he could do it over again, he would have been better at time management.

These African-American men were challenged with their capacity to manage time by striking a balance between family life, work, and school. Discipline became the goal for each of these research participants in order to balance their activities for the purpose of doctorate completion. It became a necessity to seek a balance between family life, work, and school in order to achieve the ultimate goal, the doctorate.

Balance between Doctoral Study and Social Life

Time management included reaching a balance between family life, work, and school, which was shared by most research participants. Another aspect was achieving a balance between doctoral study and social life. While one research participant presented the importance of social life as a distraction needed during doctoral degree pursuit, other research participants failed to mention it, however, it is the researcher's view that perhaps incorporating more recreational activities in the lives of the research participants during this time might have reduced some stress.

The Case of Larenz.

It seemed like there was never enough time in a day to get things done, according to Larenz, as described, below:

> It's like you're always racing to beat a clock, to beat a time to get papers in, to get class in, and to balance practicum, internship, and supervision. There was something scheduled for you everyday. I found that after my first year, I had to tell my graduate professor that I found myself focusing more on supporting him than focusing on my own work.

Larenz believed that his professor got upset about his comment, which for Larenz, became another challenge. Larenz had only a few more classes with the professor who failed to utilize Larenz as much in a graduate assistantship after that, causing Larenz to lose money. He was forced to go outside his department to find a graduate assistantship.

Larenz said that managing his time included, for him, balancing a social life with studies and that it seemed like he had no time to do anything that was not related to school while he was working on his Ph.D. But, sometimes he forced himself to take a mental health break and to do something recreational whether it was a movie, or it was dating, or "hanging" with some of his fraternity brothers, or playing basketball. Larenz admitted that he felt guilty when he had something else to do. On one hand, he needed to take the mental break, but on the other hand, he felt bad when he took the opportunity to take a break, as described, below:

> It was hard to develop a social life and to do fun things because I had to remind myself of what I was there to accomplish. Suffer now, results later. Results now,

> suffer later. I decided to suffer first and make time for recreation, social life, and whatever I could do.

Larenz believes he balanced doctoral study and social life pretty well. He had colleagues in the program who served as a support system for him. If the colleagues had not been there, Larenz said, “I would have felt like I was on an island.” He spoke of the value of reaching a balance between doctoral study and social life in addition to balancing family life, work, and school. Engaging in social activity at periods of doctoral study was a means of taking a mental health break. It is worthy to note that engaging in social activity helped to reduce stress during doctoral degree pursuit.

Time for Studies, Assignments, and Projects

In addition to the evolving time pressures of balancing between family life, work, and school as well as balancing between doctoral study and social life, some research participants were challenged by having enough time to devote to studies, assignments, projects, etc. Getting an inadequate amount of sleep and the deficiency in time for vacations were revealed as outcomes of time management imbalances.

The Case of Adam.

In contrast to the other men, Adam revealed a privilege that the other men were unable to do, which was to not work while he worked on his dissertation, as noted, below:

> As you know, when working, it takes away from your study time. Working even part-time was very, very difficult. I had a family. I took care of the kids. I would take my daughter back and forth to the day care and the other half of the time, she

was with me. So, I told my wife I had to be able to focus totally on my school work. I wanted to get this done and get it done in a timely manner.

Adam's wife was supportive of him not working, or working part-time when he worked on his dissertation. He asked her to grant him two years of not working to finish the doctorate, to which she approved. Adam shared that his wife was not the type of person that would remind him of what he had said. "I just always knew what I promised and I wanted to live up to that promise," Adam said. "What helped me out to focus on the dissertation was not working."

Adam did take a vacation, but continued to write on his dissertation while on vacation, as noted, below:

> When you're on a dissertation, you live it and dream it. And so, when my wife and I decided to take a vacation, my wife said, 'oh you're going to bring your laptop?' I said, 'Oh, do you want me to finish?'

Adam and his wife went to Hawaii right before he finished his dissertation and he took his laptop with him and on the plane and worked on his dissertation. Upon arrival in Hawaii and to make sure that his wife had a good time on the trip, he would make sure that he woke up at 4:00 a.m., and write some. As soon as she would wake up, he devoted all of his time to her, as he described, below:

> She might wake up at 7:00 a.m. and then we would go and have breakfast, and go and enjoy the day. At night, I would get some sleep and then at 4:00 a.m., every day I was on vacation, I had at least four hours of writing.

For Adam, even balancing time while on vacation was a challenge and a sacrifice.

The Cases of Charles and Earl.

Charles confessed that for him, the total focus had to be on his studies. To do this, he thought it was necessary to "go underground and disappear," as noted, below:

> You are not going to be able to hang out with your friends or your family too much. There might be a few funerals you miss. There might be some important family events that you are going to miss if you are going to get through it. If you don't drop that, you will not finish.

Charles shared that he dropped all of his extra curricular activities and stressed that cutting out other activities was necessary until achieving the doctorate.

Like Charles, Earl talked about acquiring enough time to focus on his studies. "Have your action plan," Earl said. Earl pointed out the importance of including children with the activities of the doctoral program. "Bring your children to class if you can," Earl said. "Let them experience class with you." He recommended taking them to the library and letting them know that the two were working on a doctorate together. Earl got passionate about his experience and said, "When my daughter was two when I started my doctorate, I let her experience what it was to go to class. She is now enrolled in college and doing very well. Those experiences became a part of her."

The Case of Percy.

In contrast to the other research participants, Percy maintained a good balance regarding his time management. Percy, who was single at the time and working a 40-hour a week job, recalled how he would go to work at 2:00 p.m. and work until 8:00 p.m. Then, he worked at the university from 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon. Even with that, he said that he was able to maintain a balance. "Once I got home, I was able to get my studying

done," Percy said. During the time that he was going through his undergraduate career, he had shaped his mindset in such a way that he was able to balance a lot of competing demands. He was a student athlete and all of his classes were 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. He would then work out, participate in practice until about 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m., go get something to eat, go home, and then go to sleep until about 1:00 a.m. He recalled:

> I would set my alarm clock at 1:00 a.m. after sleeping from about 8:00 p.m. or 9 p.m., get up, study for about three or four hours, get a couple hours sleep, get up around 7:00 a.m., get ready for class, go to class, and start a new day.

Once Percy enrolled in graduate school, he did the same thing. Percy basically had a 24-hour plan, but he didn't sleep eight hours. His activities were broken up into little segments.

This section focused on challenges faced by some research participants regarding having enough time to devote to studies, assignments, projects, etc. The lack of sleep for some and the deficiency in time for vacations were revealed as pressures toward achieving balance in time management when pursuing the doctorate.

Finding adequate time to focus on studies, assignments, projects, etc. was a challenge shared by almost all of the African-American men in this research study. These men were faced with challenges in balancing time commitments with families, work, school, and social life. When time management imbalances occurred, the outcome resulted in sleep deprivation and the inability to take vacations in most cases. What is clear is that time management was a challenge.

Doctoral Program-related Issues

In addition to the financial pressure and time management challenges, most of the research participants were challenged by doctoral program matters. Several research participants shared how they were challenged by the writing requirements while most of the participants discussed at length the challenges involved in putting together a doctoral committee whereby the members got along, were supportive of the doctoral candidate, were helpful to the candidate in the development of a prospectus, and helpful in the development of the candidate's dissertation.

Writing Requirements

Writing requirements were a major issue for several research participants. The issue with writing included problems with the length of projects and with extensive writing requirements, writing not directed toward the dissertation, conflicting professorial writing demands, and the amount of writing assignments that in some instances became overwhelming. Examples of the writing problems are illustrated in the paragraphs that follow.

The Cases of Earl and Marcus.

Earl was frustrated with the writing aspect of getting a doctorate because he started off writing papers in one direction, but the writing failed to be cohesive with his dissertation topic, as described, below:

> By the end of my first year, I knew what topic I was going to write about so in each class I wrote toward my dissertation. Even though my writing skills were not that great, I had to work harder and get more critiques on my writing.

Earl advised that when one is writing, one should write papers and/or articles directed toward their dissertation topic so that one can formulate a model that can be emulated later.

Like Earl, Marcus was frustrated by some of the writing requirements in his doctoral program and shared how each student was required to have a six-chapter dissertation with 300 pages and 300 references, which was a challenge, as Earl described, below:

> When you think you have done well and you get a paper with all these red marks on it, it just takes all of the air out of you. Then you will go back and do it the way they wanted it, and they will correct the changes that they made. It was the craziest thing I've ever seen. You had to go back and find the documents where they did the corrections and show them that this is what they wanted.

He said that he had to do this sometimes and show that he had written a paper the way he had been told, but it had still been red-marked. Marcus shared his frustration with this process and so was his wife who was doing the typing for him and making the changes that the professors wanted with the categories and the style that they wanted, only to find out that the changes were incorrect. He recalled:

> At one time, I think she was just about ready to say, 'I don't know how you are going to complete this thing, because I'm ready to quit myself.' So, we had our pity party, but we got through it together.

The Case of Larenz.

Earl and Marcus were joined by Larenz in their viewpoint that writing requirements were difficult. Larenz, who admitted that he struggled with writing all the

way through school, cited the struggle with writing in the doctoral program to a connection with the different demands from his professors. “One professor would indicate that my language was OK and then another made me feel like I was the dumbest student in the program,” Larenz said. For Larenz, the struggle was due to the feedback that he received from most of his professors. “There was never anything about my intellect that was inferior in their view, but it was about my writing,” said Larenz who confessed that he had spent a lot of money developing his writing skills, which he thought had paid off. “I’m not going to say that I’m a prolific writer, but I’m OK,” he said.

Larenz continued by sharing some insight into what he thought might have been a problem with his writing and how he had learned to change it. “I had to learn a strategy with my delivery because sometimes coming from the inner city, you become a product of your environment,” said Larenz who tended to use language or phrases that white professors were not accustomed to and thus, he was scrutinized through his writing, as described, below:

> They did not look at the cross-cultural differences and make reasonable accommodations for any of that because we’re part of their world so to speak and it was kind of like this is the most appropriate way to convey anything that you want to write. I had to suspend my own personal identity as a Black kid from the inner city trying this new thing out called, Ph.D.

Although Larenz admits that he really didn’t know what it took to be successful, he believes that his writing was his biggest struggle because of his writing style. He confirmed that he followed the APA (American Psychological Association) style, and

more specifically the format and rules of APA. “The problem was my style, syntax, and flow,” Larenz said, “and sometimes, my problem was grammar, subject-verb agreement—basic stuff that I should have known, but because of my development, it was a challenge for me.”

The Case of Gary.

Although Gary considered himself to be a good writer, he experienced problems with writing too. He gave an example of how he was writing an article as a student to compete in a writing competition, which he won. Gary said that his professors had piled writing assignments on him outside of his class work as well as assigned him to do a monograph. Gary was so overwhelmed that he sought his professor’s help and was surprised when the professor said, ‘well, you’ve got to do what you got to do.’ This professor supported Gary’s decision to remove himself from the monograph. Gary realized the value of writing, but also of communicating with his professors when work was at an extreme.

For several research participants, writing requirements were a major issue. Problems with lengthy writing projects, writing papers that were not directed toward the dissertation, writing assignments with varying feedback from professors that conflicted at times, and becoming overpowered with the amount of writing assignments were issues identified.

Working with Doctoral Committees

In addition to writing requirements being a challenge, many of the research participants revealed that they experienced challenges with assembling a doctoral committee. The criteria stipulated for a good committee included one whereby the

members got along, were supportive of the doctoral candidate, and were helpful to the candidate in the development of the prospectus and the candidate's dissertation.

The Case of Marcus.

For Marcus, the composition of his doctoral committee was a challenge. Marcus revealed that an agreement had been reached on the subject for which his dissertation was to be written. However, it seemed that every time his doctoral committee met, which was every 45 days, the Dean (who was on his committee) wanted to change the topic, which was changed at least three times. "That got frustrating," Marcus said. Originally, Marcus had written a paper centered on the topic of his dissertation for which the committee members agreed to the topic, but later changed. Marcus recalled:

> It actually went 180 degrees right around because we went back to the original topic after we changed twice. I could have saved a year and completed my dissertation on time. It would have cost me less money if we had stayed on course.

The Cases of Ronal and Charles.

Ronal revealed that he did not realize the importance of a committee to a student completing the dissertation and completing doctoral studies. "That committee is vital," Ronal said. "I mean, it's essential," as described, below:

> You have to look at the committee and see—not only can the committee work with you, but can they work with each other. And when they are not working with each other, you are the person that's in the middle. And so, I think choosing that committee working with you and with each other is so vital.

Surfing the academic politics of putting together a committee was a challenge for Charles also as it had been for Ronal and even Marcus, as Charles noted, below:

> You have to put people on your committee who are compatible with your desires, with your personality, and even your ideas of research. Some people don't respect qualitative data. They only respect quantitative data and some people believe that's the only reliable and validated data one should collect.

Charles fought through the academic politics and had to endure the politics of professors not liking one another, as described, below:

> Some of my committee members had personal problems with one another. One professor might look down on another professor because they have had alcohol or other drug problems, or they might have been married three or four times. They just didn't like them, or they didn't like the way they dressed or acted or behaved. When you try to put five people in a room, they've got to be compatible.

Charles took many classes first from different professors before choosing five people to serve on his doctoral committee. He confessed that he took classes to see if each professor and he "had a meeting of the minds," to determine if the professor was interested in what he was interested in, and to find out if the professor would support him. This took about five or six years for Charles who said that he overcame this challenge by following the directions of his Co-Chair. "If they said, 'don't put this person on (the committee),' I didn't put them on. If they said to 'put them off,' I wouldn't invite them back. I took the advice of my co-chairs," Charles said.

Charles also experienced problems with his doctoral committee, as described, below:

> It is the most difficult thing to get five people in a room at the same time because they teach overseas, have different schedules, have children, have other lives, and even though three or four of them might be able to meet on a particular day, it was highly unlikely that you could get all five.

The Case of Adam.

For Adam, the challenge was not having the opportunity to participate on a good research team that would have helped him learn how to conduct research more effectively. “I would have been able to write more publications than I have now,” said Adam who felt like he would have been able to take advantage of networking opportunities in the academic community. He found out that professors were introducing their students to other professors or either to other researchers and Adam thought that he had missed out on this. “I didn’t know how my professor, who was great, was trying to influence me being on a research team because I guess my research was so different,” Adam said. Adam explained that much of the research was geared toward the professors’ research and if a student wanted to be on the professor’s research team, the student had to be able to contribute. If a student’s interests were like the professor’s interests, then the professor would take the student on as part of the research team. Adam revealed that the research team students helped the professor to write, and served as a co-author on a publication, as he noted, below:

> That’s how a lot of the students got into academia. Well, I missed that boat and because of it, I wasn’t qualified to be in academia as far as the professorship. I think it somewhat hindered me from being the best researcher that I could have been.

Adam faced another challenge, which related to his study group. He recalled how his professors recommended that doctoral students study in groups. “I guess the people I chose to study with were the wrong people because we didn’t really do much studying,” Adam said. “I was kind of on my own to study.” Adam had failed the Comprehensive Exam when he took it initially. The students were given two tries and if a student failed to pass the first time, then they could take it the next semester a second time. If they failed to pass it the second time, they were ousted from the program. Adam said that for him, passing the Comprehensive Exam gave him the most pressure. “I put a lot of pressure on myself to really perform,” he said. Adam was told that he missed passing by “a little bit,” but said that if one missed it, it was missed.

Adam’s next challenge was as a result of him not doing well on his Comprehensive Exam, but he developed a studying routine to ensure passage the second time, as described, below:

> I knew I had to spend quality time studying for this final exam that I knew I would only have one more shot to pass. I took the entire summer just to study for Comps. I woke up at 4 o’clock in the morning. I looked through all the books I had read, checked out books, and brought books home trying to make sure I knew about that particular subject.

Adam shared how students did not know the composition of the test, but knew there was basic information that they had to know. Adam wanted to make sure he was able to answer hypothetical questions or be able to address anything someone asked. Adam took the whole summer studying and practiced answering questions up until he took the exam in August. Adam met with his Chair who would tell him if something was

not good enough and his Chair would ask him to write something better. Adam queried his Chair on how he could write better and she gave him tips on how he could make his writing sound better. Because he met with her, he believes that his writing improved and that he learned how to write, as he described, below:

> She helped me with tips like, 'State the problem and then after you state the problem thoroughly and concisely, then lead into a solution and support your work.' And, I was able to do that, and I practiced on different scenarios and different questions.

Adam stressed how he kept going over his materials and having his wife look at his work and asking her if it made sense.

> She was just real good, from a lay person's point of view, at picking out how some things didn't make sense. You had to make sense to somebody who didn't know anything about this field. And so, after that, I felt I was ready for the Comps. And so, I took it, and I felt extremely good about it. I just felt it—that sense of peace.

In this section, the challenges involved with assembling a doctoral committee were featured. The criteria stipulated for a well-functioning or cohesive committee consisted of a committee where the members interrelated well, supported the doctoral candidate, and helped the candidate develop the prospectus as well as develop the candidate's dissertation.

Other Doctoral Program Matters

Other research participants experienced other difficulties in their doctoral program like the rigor of the doctoral program, lack of a support structure in the Ph.D.

Program, getting research participants, passing the comprehensive exam, or knowing what to expect in the doctoral program.

The Case of Blair.

Blair pointed out that the rigor of the doctoral program was a challenge with the doctoral program, as described, below:

> It's a very tough journey getting a Ph.D. I saw a lot of good people fall by the wayside. They did not finish. So that rigor, in and of itself—the rigor of the courses, the rigor of the requirements, the homework, the papers, tons of reading, was a challenge. It takes its toll over time and it's designed to be that way.

Blair compared pursuing a doctorate to being a Marine, as he noted, below:

> The few and the proud join the Marines. Everyone else goes to the Army, and that's what a Ph.D. is. Most people just stop at a master's degree. But, the few that choose to go through the baptism of fire will come out with three stripes and a graduation gown that indicates you have been tested.

The Case of Samson.

Samson identified the lack of a support structure in the Ph.D. Program itself as a major challenge for him. This lack was evident in his view despite the fact that Samson's university possessed Carnegie classification as a Research 1 institution and was a newer program at that time. In the top 20, his university was a predominantly white institution that had a history of African Americans not doing well in his program, especially in the research emphasis, according to Samson. He recalled:

> There were no minority professors, except for one who actually taught one of the research classes. So, when you looked for mentors in the faculty ranks who can

> really take you under their wing, show you the ways of academia and research, and how to be a good doctoral student, there were none available.

Samson revealed that as an African-American male, there was a sentiment that he would not finish the doctorate and would not do as well in the research courses, as he noted, below:

> It's those typical stereotypes that we get as African Americans. 'He's going to be a terrible writer,' or 'He's not going to be able to do well in the research courses because it involves math.' So part of my motivation was to prove them wrong. When I wrote papers, although I knew that they were good, I would, for example, pass them through three or four people to make sure that they were flawless when they got back to them, just to prove them wrong.

Samson confessed that being an African-American male in the program, in his opinion, probably presented more problems for him than it did solutions. He believed that when the program was designed that the designers failed to take into consideration that there would be a certain percentage of African Americans in the program, as described, below:

> For example, when we took the class on diversity in higher education, we had a Caucasian professor teaching that class. That's not to say that a Caucasian professor cannot teach that class, but the focus in the class was very narrow and did not touch on experiences that African Americans or Asians or Hispanics or anybody else might have in the academy.

The Case of James.

Highlighting another difficulty, James talked about his experiences of completing his doctorate in a location offsite, out-of-the-country, and not on campus. He recalled:

> The first couple of years, we couldn't reach folks on campus, and of course with the time difference, we were making phone calls at 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. to be able to reach the professors that we needed to talk to.

James was glad to have cohorts in his program. He talked about how his doctoral program would fly a professor overseas once a month to teach a course for two weeks, but that every summer the students were required to do a residency on campus. Both the Prospectus and the final defense had to be done on campus, as described, below:

> The final exams or the generals took place on Saturday, Sunday, and a following Saturday. These were done online, but logistically, there was an issue. These were things that could be done with more effective planning. So, it was through that process that I think they have made it better for new Cohorts, especially since there is a key individual whose precise job is to take care of the 30 of us who live in Italy, England, Belgium, and Germany.

James, who implied that the main problem was in dealing with the professors at the campus at home, enjoyed being able to come home to the campus, but for some of the students who had never been to the main university campus and were not familiar with the area, it was extremely challenging because they did not know who to contact when they arrived on campus, according to James. "There was no one available to help them with the shuttle," James said. "Just little things and those are the little issues that can create monumental effects to cause folk to drop and quit. I wasn't quitting for anything."

The Case of Edward.

The challenge for Edward was that he was unaware of what to expect in working on his doctorate. “I had no clue what a Ph.D. was all about or how to get one,” Edward said. Edward had never concentrated on writing in any of his undergraduate work. He said that if he had, he would have written papers about the same subject all through graduate school—his master’s degrees. “I muddled through, figuring it out as I went along,” Edward said. He shared how on each Friday, all the graduate students went to drink beer at a nearby pub/grill. He recalled:

> I don’t drink and I don’t hang out. I would never go and I didn’t realize that I was actually being alienated and that those were going to be problems because when they said jump, I was supposed to say, how high.

Continuing to share about his experience at the university, Edward said that the academic culture was a challenge for him also. “Higher education is designed to get people to get published in books that most people don’t read unless they are doing research,” he said. “I had a real problem with basically work that meant nothing.”

Edward felt that he had to re-quote all of the great people and as long as he did that, he would get good grades, but he felt that this process did not allow for any innovation specific to his ethnic group. “The actual culture of becoming a researcher was not in my interest once I got into it,” Edward said. But, Edward admitted that he did what he had to do to get the work done. “You just tell yourself, ‘I’m going to do whatever they say do until I get my Ph.D. and then I’m going to do what I want to do,’” Edward said.

As though these issues were not enough for Edward, cultural bias was another challenge for him. He had wanted to do research in areas that affected African

Americans, had been taught that research had to be objective, and not to seek conclusions. He recalled:

> I wrote a paper about politics and methodology, and one of the things that I said in the paper was that just by the fact of what you choose to research is a cultural decision. From my view, if you say, for example, I'm going to research this and not this, let's not say that research is objective because it's not.

Eventually, Edward just got tired of being in school. It took him 10 years to finish his Ph.D. "I finally knew that my time was going to be up," Edward said. He shared what he said in essence to his professors, "What do ya'll want from me—wash your cars? What is it that you need? I just need to finish. Whatever it is you want, I will do. I just need to finish.'" Edward confessed that as long as he did exactly what he was told and exactly what his professors wanted him to do, the professors were supportive, as described, below:

> If you had any kind of idea of doing something not the way they wanted, it basically became their dissertation. They were not supportive of anything that was outside of what they wanted. This is how it was. They treated you almost like you were an undergraduate. I guess I expected more critical thinking and intellectual sparring in class with less of lecturing.

The Case of Ronal.

Ronal became fearful of getting the doctorate. "They tell you horror stories and how tough and how hard it is," Ronal said. "But, I believed them because I started my doctoral program in the late '80s and early 90's, and I didn't complete it," Ronal said. Ronal got to the ABD (all but dissertation) stage and dropped simply because of the fear

of the dissertation and the horror stories that he had heard. In addition to fear, boosting of Ronal's self esteem was a challenge. He recalled:

> I remember one fellow telling me one time, 'you know as much as everyone else in here. You have to speak up.' Once you sit down and start to visit with people, one on one, you start to find out that you may be above their level, but people give that persona at times to where you think that they are superior and they are not. That's one thing that the Chairperson was good at saying, 'you have as much knowledge about this subject matter as anybody in the group.'

To sum up this section, there were research participants who experienced other difficulties in their doctoral program. The rigor of the doctoral program was cited as a challenge as well as the lack of a support structure in the Ph.D. Program. Other difficulties featured had to do with the process of getting research participants, passing the comprehensive exam, or knowing what to expect in the doctoral program.

Summarizing the section focused on doctoral program related challenges for research participants, there were doctoral program matters or incidents in addition to the financial pressure and time management challenges. These doctoral program matters included the writing requirements in the doctoral programs as well as the challenges involved in forming a doctoral committee whereby committee members were a cohesive group, were supportive of the doctoral candidate, and were helpful to the candidate in the development of a prospectus and in the development of the candidate's dissertation.

Professorial Matters

Professors, more specifically, were thought to be a challenge for most of the research participants. Some experienced difficulty regarding the expectations from their

Chair or other faculty members and in other instances, professors projected a lack of trust for a few African-American males. Some professors seemed to display bias toward some research participants either in the manner in which they interfaced with them in class or by questioning whether they completed specified assignments alone. Although the instances cited by the research participants can be deemed as instances that can happen to anyone, the participants revealed that they perceived racial bias to be keen in those situations.

Professor Expectations

A major challenge for most of the research participants were the actions of professors. For these research participants, the expectations from the Chair or other faculty members were unclear.

The Case of James.

James experienced difficulty with some of his professors while working on the doctorate. He revealed how one of his committee members shared with him during his defense that some of the Board members who selected the 30 people who were in his cohort actually stated that James would be one of the first persons to drop out of the program. Of the 30, five were African-Americans, one was Hispanic American, and the rest were European American, according to James. “Of the 30, I was the third to graduate,” James said. The committee member asked James what he would do with that information, as noted, below:

> I said that I took that information not as an insult and not as a surprise. But, I took it as confirmation that as far as we (African Americans) have come, we really have that much further to go. So to the folks that made that comment, I shook

their hands and said I made it anyway. Thank you for your support. And, I kept moving. You can't stop what God has destined. What God has for me, He has for me.

James also revealed how he had initially failed the comprehensive exam, but when he passed it the second time, was called in by the person who administered the exam and informed that his exam was better than anyone else's exam. James said that he went on to indicate that he did not understand because James had failed the exam the last time. James said that he asked him if anyone had written anything for him. James' response was that he had spent months preparing for the exam, as described, below:

> Some people probably over prepare, but I knew I had this last time to do it, and I just wanted to make sure that I did well. Most folks don't spend three months just studying for the comps.

The outcome was that James was congratulated for having passed the exam.

The Case of Edward.

Like James, Edward revealed that he had a professor that encouraged him and another African-American male to quit the doctoral program. His professor said to him, 'you might want to reconsider whether you really want to get a Ph.D. or not.' Edward admitted that he had written a horrible paper. "I had written 27 pages the night before and he gave me a 'C' and I was happy," Edward said. Edward shared that when the professor saw the 'C', he felt that Edward was not qualified to do graduate work and perhaps ought to consider quitting. Edward relayed another example of a problem with a professor for whom he was serving as a teaching assistant, and for which he thought was another example of not "playing games well." Edward showed up to class to teach and his

professor said, ‘you never come to my office and sit and talk to me.’ “I actually said, ‘I’m busy,’” Edward said. To Edward, his response showed that he did not know how to “play the game.”

The Case of Larenz.

Larenz cited how difficult it was to complete the doctorate because he felt that some of the professors made things harder than they should have been. “Everybody has their own personal style and their own expectations,” Larenz said. “It was hard trying to please every professor because it seemed like they wanted some of the similar things, but some of it was significantly different as well.” Larenz admitted that he did not really know what it took because he didn’t have too many people that he had close relationships with that could actually tell him how to get through the doctoral degree maze. He had not been around anyone who actually achieved a Ph.D. “I knew of people who gave me that hope to think that I could do it too as a young Black man, but just trying to please the professors seemed like it was just a hard task,” Larenz said.

The Case of Adam.

Turning to the experiences of Adam, who failed his general exam the first time, he knew that he had to pass the exam the second time. He spent the entire summer preparing for it, as noted, below:

> Some people probably over prepare, but I knew I had this last time to do it, and I just wanted to make sure that I did well. My professor said, ‘did anybody write anything for you?’ No, what do you mean by that? He said to me, ‘You know, I don’t see how anybody would fail at the beginning, and then all of a sudden, they would pass.’ I said well, it happened.

One of the persons who graded his exam doubted his work and Adam had made an ‘A’ in her class and she knew the type of work he could do, as described, below:

> That was really troublesome. I got an ‘A’ from professors who graded my test in two classes. One was a white woman and the other was a Hispanic woman, and so, I really was very disappointed with the accusation. And then he said, ‘Well, is there anything you want to add?’ Basically, he was saying, is there anything for which you want to come clean? I asked him what kind of statement he wanted me to make? This is my work. Then, they made me wait, and said, ‘we’ll get back with you.’ I said, ‘What do you mean we’ll get back with you.’ So that was very stressful.

The Case of Charles.

Like Adam, Charles talked about his doctoral committee members. He had two people who co-chaired his committee. One person’s focus was in the qualitative arena while the other one was a 30-year tenured professor who taught statistics for 30 years. Charles recalled:

> He had to go back to school and take a class in qualitative analysis in order to understand my research, and he was willing to do so. He did it and he made a point about it. He met me in the hallway outside one of my classes and said, ‘I’m taking this class just for you.’ He was willing to chair my committee and was never against me.

Charles’ Chair inherited him from a professor who had retired. The problem was that his Chair’s primary focus was quantitative research, as described, below:

> When I came to him and said, 'I'm collecting data by way of interviews.' He said, 'I don't know anything about that.' And he realized that and went back and took classes and then brought someone in from out-of-state who was a respected researcher in that arena and she was my co-chair.

Charles revealed that because of his Chair's experience and tenure level, he could move the dissertation through the process quickly. "But, he didn't understand the methodology," Charles said. However, Charles' co-chair understood the methodology although she was new and didn't have the political savvy. "She didn't have the juice to move it through," Charles said.

The Case of Samson.

Samson spoke about the importance of African-Americans serving as professor mentors for doctoral students, as noted, below:

> I am not saying that there were not some of the majority professors there who didn't show care and compassion; in fact, I had a wonderful major professor who was very supportive. But, his support was not like someone who looks like you and who has had similar experiences as you have, giving you that support.

Most of the research participants were challenged by the actions of professors. They experienced difficulty with the expectations from their Chair or other faculty members. Although these research participants experienced lack of support or doubt on the part of some professors, they persevered and continued to pursue their goal.

Lack of Trust/Bias

For a few African-American males, there were professors who exhibited bias toward these research participants either in the manner in which they interfaced with

them in class or by questioning whether they completed specified assignments alone. Although the instances cited by the research participants were deemed as instances that can happen to anyone, the participants revealed that they perceived racial bias to be keen in those circumstances.

The Cases of Edward and Charles.

Edward relayed an experience whereby while listening to a professor's lecture, the professor made a comment about the Black church for which Edward did not agree. He recalled:

> I was thinking that this was graduate school, raised my hand to give a counter point, and he (the professor) said to me, 'well, I'm the one with the Ph.D.' So, for me being young and naïve, I said, 'well, I'm the one that's Black and I've been going to one (Black church) for the last 25 years. How long have you been going to one?' Of course, that didn't go over well in class. But, I hadn't learned to play the game.

Edward admitted that he didn't learn to "play the game" until it was almost time for his dissertation to be finished.

Charles shared that it was difficult to get committee members to believe in the student. Because Charles' dissertation was regarding a controversial topic, he revealed that it was necessary to develop a good rapport with his committee members so that they could focus on the process rather than getting engrossed with the actual topic, as noted, below:

> People are uncomfortable with talking about some topics. Sometimes the professors are uncomfortable. Certainly, the IRB people were highly

> uncomfortable with approving any type of study about my topic because they didn't want the university being liable or any of their students to be subjected to any kind of abuse or harassment. That was always forefront on their minds even though I considered myself the most professional person to do this, but everybody didn't know me or trust me.

The Case of Earl.

Earl revealed how after he had completed his coursework and was ready to start working on his dissertation, his Doctoral Committee Chair displayed lack of confidence in his ability to complete the doctorate and offended him. "I know he didn't want me in the program," Earl said. "He said to me, 'you can't write.'" Earl responded to the professor by asking him to teach him how to write, but the Chair told him that he should already know writing. "The point is that you've got to have a Chair who is willing to work with you even if you may not understand the writing," Earl said. Furthermore, in another action, the university had failed to accept any of his master's level hours. "It was a way of getting you out of the system," Earl said. Earl interpreted this action as an indication that the individuals who did not accept his master's degree hours thought they were going to take his money and pile this extra number of hours upon him so he could get distraught and leave. Earl's response was, "I am going to go ahead and get it (the hours) out of the way." Earl recalled:

> I got the 90 hours out of the way and they were surprised about that. Then, one of my colleagues said to me, 'they didn't like you in the department. They didn't think you were going to graduate. I was even surprised.' I said, I guess you are because I took 104 hours when you only took 60.

For some research participants, their professors displayed a lack of trust for them. These professors were biased toward some research participants in the manner in which they communicated with them in class or by the way that they posed questions regarding specified assignments that the men had completed. Although the instances cited by the research participants can be considered scenarios that can happen to anyone, the participants revealed that they believed racial bias was an underlying force in those situations.

To sum up this section, according to the participants, there were professors who conveyed a lack of trust of some of the African-American males. These professors exhibited bias toward the men in the manner in which they interacted with them in class or by questioning the authorship of their written assignments.

Regarding challenges for most of the research participants in completing the doctorate, professors were thought to be a major challenge. Some research participants experienced difficulty with knowing the expectations of their Chair or other faculty members. In other instances, professors behaved in a manner that these African-American men believed to be acts of bias. Some professors were biased toward some research participants either by the way they interfaced with them in class or by the way in which they inquired about how they completed specified assignments.

Finally, although many of the research participants experienced one or more challenges while completing the doctorate, they revealed their motivations to complete the degree outlined earlier as having the effect of keeping them focused on their goal. The challenges they faced were in a sense pitted against their motivations to succeed. A

religious foundation, support from family and/or mentors, and a persevering attitude and spirit seemed to help them achieve the milestone of a doctorate.

Research Participants' Advice to African-American Males Pursuing the Doctorate

Turning from the challenges confronted by the research participants during doctoral study, the research participants shared advice with the researcher for African-American males seeking a doctorate. This advice, which appears of benefit to these men, is advice that the researcher believes to be appropriate advice for anyone pursuing a doctorate. The advice can be categorized into four areas including tips targeted at doctoral programs, coping strategies while engaging in a doctoral program, approaches to take while pursuing the doctorate, and the types of skills to develop to be successful in a doctoral program.

Tips Targeted at Doctoral Programs

The revealed tips, which were targeted at doctoral programs, were as follows:

1) Encourage more African Americans to achieve the terminal degree.

2) If given the opportunity, pursue the doctorate. African-American men were urged to work on developing and improving themselves.

3) To be successful in completing the doctorate, pick the higher education institution based upon the professors. It was believed that professors were needed to help support the doctoral student and lead the student through the doctoral process.

4) Try to become a full-time doctoral student. Those students in this status usually completed their doctorate quicker and engaged in more scholarly activities.

5) Try to pursue the doctorate as early as possible. It was believed pursuing the degree earlier while one was still focused, was better before the individual had all other competing demands on their time.

6) Select a doctoral program that is supportive of the candidate.

In summary, the revealed tips, which were targeted at doctoral programs, included encouraging more African Americans to achieve the terminal degree, pursuing the doctorate if given the opportunity, choosing the higher education institution based upon the professors at an institution in order to be successful in completing the doctorate, encouragement to try becoming a full-time doctoral student, urging African-American males to pursue the doctorate as early as possible in their life span, and selecting a doctoral program that provides support to its students.

Coping Strategies

Six coping strategies while engaging in a doctoral program were revealed as advice to African-American males who wanted to pursue the doctorate. These strategies were:

1) Studying with people in the doctoral program. African-American men were cautioned against working alone and urged to seek help from professors.

2) Attending a Bible-based church or become part of a religious environment. The purpose would be to become spiritually uplifted especially when faced with obstacles.

3) Acquiring a mentor or network of mentors who are supportive and interested in the student's ideas. It was believed that the mentor was the one needed to help the doctoral student to navigate through the academic politics of getting a doctorate.

4) Setting realistic goals. African-American men were urged to take advantage of education past high school and move to the terminal degree.

5) Leaning on one's family. African-American men were advised to do right by their family and the family's response would be to do them right by supporting them.

6) Being a mentor and pass on what is learned to younger people. African-American males were urged to find other younger African-American men or women, but particularly men, who wanted to pursue the doctorate and mentor them.

In summary, the research participants advised African-American males who wanted to pursue the doctorate to conduct six coping strategies while engaging in a doctoral program. The strategies included studying with people in the doctoral program, becoming part of a religious environment that could include attending a Bible-based church, finding a mentor or network of mentors who were supportive and interested in their ideas, the setting of realistic goals, being able to lean on one's family, and becoming a mentor by passing on what they had learned to younger people.

Approaches to Take While Pursuing the Doctorate

The research participants also shared six approaches to take while pursuing the doctorate. These approaches included:

1) Having an open mind and not entering the doctoral program with all the answers.

2) Being willing to listen and learn. African-American men were advised to determine why they wanted the degree and to persevere to complete it.

3) Maintaining a positive attitude.

4) Being thick-skinned in order to persevere through challenges, discouragement, and/or racial bias. These men were advised to research the university they wanted to attend and if they were among the first of the ethnicity to attend, to find a Chairperson who could lead them through.

5) Sticking with the work in the doctoral program. It was acknowledged that many African Americans fail to finish the doctorate at the dissertation stage, but that they should not quit. These men were urged to stop trying to get double and triple master's degrees, and if one were to spend money or borrow the money to continue their education, that they ought to go ahead and pursue the doctorate.

6) Developing a strong work ethic. African-American men were urged to work hard and to be responsible. The hard work was likened to battle scars that become one's armor protecting one later in life.

In summary, six approaches to take while pursuing the doctorate were offered as advice by the research participants. African-American males were advised to have an open mind, enter the doctoral program not having all the answers, be willing to listen and learn, maintain a positive attitude and persevere to complete the degree, be thick-skinned, stick with the work in the doctoral program, and develop a strong work ethic.

Skills to be Developed by African-American Men

Finally, the research participants shared as advice the types of skills that African-American males should develop to be successful in a doctoral program. The skills identified included:

1) Strengthening their writing ability. It was believed that one's writing ability would be tested throughout the doctoral program. The better one could write, the easier it

would be for the doctoral candidate, since the way a person projected their knowledge was principally through writing.

2) Being competent. African-American men were urged to become knowledgeable of the theories and trends in their field and to show that they had the acumen to integrate academic information in performance, engagement in scholarly activities, and in conducting research to solve problems.

3) Being driven from within. This internal drive was believed to be the motivation needed to complete the doctorate.

4) Going above and beyond the requirements of each course. Since African-American men in a doctoral program are investing in their future, exceeding requirements could be done by making the optional reading mandatory for themselves and to gain knowledge of certain theories or models because that may be the reason they get a job later in life because of that knowledge

5) Staying focused. Focusing on the doctoral work as a priority was viewed as a requirement to complete the degree.

6) Having confidence and believing in self. It was shared that no matter what types of obstacles one confronted, criticism one received (constructive or otherwise), and/or discouragement placed in their path that confidence in their own abilities would help them overcome and persevere.

The aforementioned skills were considered critical for completing the doctoral program. Strengthening one's writing ability, being competent, being driven from within, exceeding the requirements of each course, staying focused, operating with confidence,

and believing in one's self were identified as skills that would increase the success in a doctoral program.

Summary

To provide a recap of this research study, twelve research participants reflected upon their doctoral experiences to identify their motivations for completing the doctorate. This chapter addressed challenges during doctoral study that the research participants overcame. The emergent themes encompassed financial pressure, time management, doctoral program matters, and professorial matters. Meanwhile, in order to overcome these challenges and complete the doctorate, four other themes capsulate these African-American men's motivation to complete the doctorate including: that doctoral completion was a source of inspiration, that interpersonal relationships were viewed as extrinsic motivators, that doctoral achievement was a professional goal, and that community service was a motivating force to complete the degree. Advice was offered to African-American men pursuing the doctorate in four areas including: tips targeted at doctoral programs, coping strategies, approaches to take while pursuing the doctorate, and skills to develop. An analysis concerning these findings follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the issues and experiences related to the motivation of African-American males toward the completion of the doctorate in Majority White Institutions (MWIs). Twelve (12) African-American males, who had completed a doctorate in the last 10 years at a MWI in the United States of America, were interviewed in order to gain insight into this phenomenon. A breadth of information and perceptions related to this phenomenon emerged from the interviews with these African-American males through interpretivism, a qualitative approach, which was used to analyze and interpret the data. Interpretive methods were employed in this study because the methods were deemed to be effective in discovering the meaning of the experiences of participants and once the data was obtained, it was analyzed to respond to the research questions within the context of the academic culture using this interpretive framework as a lens.

Discussion of the Findings

Chapter four dealt with four major themes that emerged regarding motivation, while chapter five focused on the challenges that these men confronted while pursuing the doctorate and how motivation helped them to overcome those challenges. This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings that includes the features of motivation as well as the challenges. After the discussion, the conclusions reached will be identified with careful attention given to answering the research questions. Crucial considerations for higher education, suggestions for further research, and a summation will follow.

Features of Motivation Uncovered

This section discusses the findings with regard to motivation as described in chapter four. Specifically, four features of motivation that were uncovered including inspiration of religious activities, interpersonal relationships, the academic credential, and community service, will be addressed to provide the researcher's analysis of their significance to this research investigation.

Religious Activities.

Religious activities served as a support mechanism for those research participants who had indicated a personal motivation for completing the doctorate. Of significance, it was found that religious activities can be used as an outlet in times of frustration and that religious activities helped these men cope with the challenges they experienced during the matriculation in their doctoral programs. Religious coping can be defined as those religiously and/or spiritually based behaviors aimed at resolving problems or managing stress (Bjorck, 2007). This coping can emerge in many forms like searching to pursue challenges with God's leadership, making the choice to submit to what one believes is God's will, requesting others to pray for them, participating more in religious actions like reading scripture or attending church worship services, and deliberately identifying ways in which God can utilize the circumstances for the good (Bjorck & Cohen, 1993). The support mechanism and coping response to doctoral program challenges were also supported by an earlier study that found that religious motivation was associated with a cognitive dimension such as open-mindedness (Knight & Sedlacek, 1981). Further in support of the significance of religious activities, in a study of academic success among African-American doctoral recipients it was found that "reliance on spirituality, their

determination, and support from faculty assisted them in overcoming their discouragement" (Adams, 1999, p. 13).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that religious coping and family support (addressed in the next section), played a significant role in meeting a basic psychological need, that of relatedness, which involves developing safe and supporting associations with others in one's social surroundings (Deci et al., 1991). Religious coping behaviors materialized from the men in this study, and, the behaviors that indicated an interpersonal relationship with a supreme being or higher power as well as the support from family members and mentors helped the men to persevere when confronted with doctoral program challenges. "Harlow (1958) has argued that individuals need to experience love and interpersonal contact to develop optimally, thus implying that there is an innate psychological need for relatedness" (Deci & Ryan, 1996, p. 8). In social contexts whereby an individual's need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is supported, the individual is enabled to preserve intrinsic motivation along with making possible the incorporation of extrinsic motivation, which helps the individual to actively engage in classroom activities, learn more comprehensively, and enhance any personal adjustments needed for classroom participation and beyond (Deci & Ryan, 1996). A secure relational foundation appears to provide a needed environment for intrinsic motivation giving one a sense of confidence in the development of strong relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Interpersonal Relationships.

Another significant element of motivation to complete the doctorate for the research participants was interpersonal relationships. Concerning this feature, it was interesting that individual family members or multiple family members were cited as

being a motivating force for completing the doctorate. Whereas many of the family members themselves had little or no higher education, they did have an appreciation for education. This finding is important for those pursuing higher education at all levels because it illustrates the value of family members' urging their loved ones to continue education despite the fact that they might not have had this opportunity.

In addition to family members being a motivating force, mentors were a second motivator for completion of the doctorate. This feature is significant because it affirms the great value of mentors helping a doctoral student navigate through the maze of a doctoral program. This finding also shows the value of serving as a faculty member and/or serving on the student's doctoral committee, whereby advice might be shared with the student at strategic times. This feature suggests that doctoral students need faculty mentors in addition to the members of their doctoral committees, and further this suggests that doctoral students would be wise to look for and approach individuals to serve as mentors to them prior to and throughout their doctoral studies. Moreover, given the importance of mentors to doctoral students, those who achieve the doctorate are needed correspondingly to serve as mentors to the next generation of young people, in their effort to attend college as well as to continue through graduate education.

These findings regarding the value of mentors support the findings of a related qualitative study, where eight African-American students' persistence in doctoral programs at MWIs was investigated. The findings revealed that forming positive relationships in the university environment was significant for graduation and the academic culture, graduate faculty members, and peer relationships were associated with persistence (Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie & Sanders, 1997). With respect to mentors, the

study found that once a personal relationship was established with a faculty member, this relationship led to opportunities for the students' being invited to participate in research and educational activities, such as presentations at conferences.

Extrinsic motivational elements identified in the findings, like interpersonal relationships with family and/or mentors and personal goal achievement, support the literature of Clevell (1987), featured in Chapter 2, who found that supportive advisers and a desire for knowledge are characteristics of those who persisted to completion of doctorates. Adams (1999) concurred with this finding regarding supportive advisers. In another study, Bingman (2003) revealed that the research participants in his study gained academic and emotional support from college professors, administrators, and students of diverse backgrounds who understood the potential racial barriers that African-American students can encounter at MWIs, and that pride in being African American contributed to their success.

The Academic Credential and Community Service.

The research participants in this study recognized their need for being credentialed in an area of expertise and they realized that the degree provided an opportunity to be a part of a higher learning community, access to leadership roles in their respective profession, and access to the credentialing required for faculty positions, or administrative leadership in the college setting. For African-American men, this credentialing is critical for their advancement in all fields of study. It is also good for their communities especially since the numbers of African-American men achieving the doctorate is very low in comparison to the majority culture. Being credentialed and advancing in their profession relates also to an unexpected finding concerning the desire

on the part of these men to engage in community service. Many of the research participants thought the doctorate would equip them to assist the community at-large, and enable them to bring the higher education resources (like research findings) to the Black community for problem solving.

The literature supported this goal indicating that operative collaboration with higher education professionals and with the community is important if their functional work is to be successful and sustained and if their theories are to add to improving the human circumstance (Maton, Perkins, & Saegert, 2006). These collaborative efforts can result in programs that prevent societal ills, action research, program evaluation, community and organizational consultation, policy analysis, advocacy, community development, and building of coalitions in the community (Rappaport & Seidman, 2000).

Moreover, acquiring this academic credential (the doctorate) was viewed as valuable to many of the men in this study because they saw their future role as benefiting others and they identified with a professional role, for which the credential enabled them to assume as one that served the community. With regard to the theoretic framework used in this study, this finding is an example of identified regulation, which is considered to be an extrinsic motivator as part of Organismic Integration Theory.

Challenges Experienced during Doctoral Programs

This section will discuss the findings with regard to challenges experienced by the research participants during doctoral study, as described in chapter five. The challenges of significance to be addressed include financial pressures, time management, writing requirements, and assembling cohesive doctoral committees.

Financial Pressure and Time Management.

Financial pressure and time management were identified as paramount. The challenge of financial pressure suggests that more scholarships are needed for doctoral students especially for those scholars who are outside of certain disciplines, like math and science, where more scholarship aid may be presently available for minority students. For doctoral students in the social sciences and education, it is the researcher's view that more scholarships and grant aid are needed to encourage degree pursuit and completion. The literature supports this viewpoint. For example, in a study of long-term doctoral student persistence patterns, it was found that students receiving fellowships rather than research or teaching assistantships, especially those awarded in the first year, were more likely to complete the doctorate and in less time (Jacobson, 1992). In a second study, the findings indicated that doctoral students possessing fellowships or assistantships in the first two years of their doctoral programs were more likely to complete their doctorate (Bowen and Rudenstein, 1992).

Time management of multiple priorities, such as balancing family life with work commitments, and school was difficult for those research participants engaged in a doctoral program on both a full-time or part-time basis. The literature indicates that the balance of academic pursuits with personal life and responsibilities is often a struggle for graduate students (Brus, 2006). Scenarios like staying home with a sick child and not getting paid due to a lack of sick or vacation benefits, taking a child to work, missing a rescheduled mid-term exam, taking a parent to a scheduled doctor's appointment, taking an exam swiftly and leaving to meet family responsibilities prior to returning for an evening meeting with an advisor, all require prioritizing in decision making to

completing responses to these situations, each of which might be significant to school, family, work, or some combination of the roles (Brus, 2006).

> While juggling multiple roles would create difficulty with time management, the challenges facing students with dependents are unnecessarily compounded by a culture of institutional ownership that is pervasive in graduate schools. Institutional ownership is an unstated but closely held expectation that students who are truly committed to their fields of study will make themselves available to their professors and advisors at any time of day or night, on short notice, and without negotiation or complaint (Brus, 2006, p. 36).

Juggling numerous responsibilities is one of the most important skills that graduate students can learn (Krueger & Peek, 2006).

Writing Requirements.

Regarding doctoral program-related challenges, it was significant that many of the research participants indicated the writing requirements were challenging and specifically that the art of "scholarly writing" was more difficult (that is, the elements of its construction unclear). It is possible this could be partly due to the research participants' lack of exposure to "scholarly writing" prior to doctoral work and/or since professors rarely shared the difference between writing and "scholarly writing" prior to the completion of writing assignments by these research participants. This might imply that the construction elements of "scholarly writing" should be introduced to students at earlier levels of education, especially at the undergraduate level of higher education so that students could become acquainted with its characteristics and given opportunities to practice this writing form. The findings from this research investigation are supported by

the research outcomes of Johnson and Conyers (2001) and Page-Adams (1995) whose research findings focused on the support given to doctoral students from doctoral support groups. The Johnson and Conyers study outlined an approach of counseling in support groups designed to help graduate students cope with the demands of writing the doctoral dissertation, while the Page-Adams study revealed how doctoral support groups provide support for writing among group members.

Assembling of Cohesive Doctoral Committees.

An unanticipated finding to the researcher was the challenge by most of the research participants of putting together a doctoral committee, wherein the members got along, were supportive of the doctoral candidate, and were helpful to the candidate in the development of a prospectus and dissertation. It was evident that the research participants shared frustration with experiences of doctoral committee conflicts either through committee member conflicts or conflicts with the research participants individually. Challenges experienced with doctoral committees coupled with those of professors, individually, were viewed as grave, and of significance, because the research participants could not complete the doctorate without resolving these challenges. To add to the above, some research participants expressed their dismay with how some professors exhibited a lack of trust of them as students and how some professors seemed to display bias in the manner in which they interfaced with them in class or in the way they questioned whether they completed specified assignments alone. While these matters were considered challenging, the research participants failed to focus on racial bias as a deterrent for them completing the doctorate. Instead, they persisted in their studies and recognized the bias as bias, but rose above it (even if they had addressed a situation of bias) and completed

the requirements for the degree. This is crucial to convey to others for it illustrates that even when confronted with bias or prejudice in some way, one must continue to persist and achieve their goal.

The findings of this study contrasted with the literature regarding the ideal way that a committee should be formed and how it should function. According to Pedron and Evans (1992), selecting an advisor and committee includes selecting committee members whom the research participant believes are supportive and who complements their advisor. The authors admitted that students experience difficulty sometimes in discerning the correct committee members to select who are on good quality terms with their advisor and with each other. The authors also advised that committee members are selected ideally based upon the prospective benefits they can bring to a research participant's study such as being familiar with the student's literature, statistical expertise, or having editorial board membership for a journal for which the student hopes to publish their findings (Pedron & Evans, 1992).

Although the findings contrasted with the literature regarding the ideal way that a committee should be formed, other literature was supported by the challenges the research participants endured. As indicated in chapter two, racism, both institutional and personal, exists on some college and university campuses, and this problem is exacerbated further for African Americans by a lack of role models who are African American (Harris, 1996). Feagin and Sikes (1994) offered four relevant propositions, the first of which was that racism in these times can be understood as "lived experience," which refers to those daily experiences that encompass oppressive encounters of individuals like African Americans as they pass through conventionally white places and

the oppressed individual's interpretation of the experiences. Secondly, severe discriminatory experiences are excruciating and traumatic in the immediate circumstances and after effects, and can turn out to be a collective blow on specific individuals, their families, and their communities. Thirdly, repeated racist experiences affect considerably a black person's conduct and understanding of life and the social world. Lastly, the daily racial hostility and discriminatory experiences that middle-class and other African Americans encounter are the basics of the "interlocking societal structures and processes called 'institutionalized racism.'" Although some of the men encountered circumstances for which they were frustrated or dissatisfied due to situations of bias, these men did not allow the situations to become barriers to their ultimate achievement of the degree.

It was interesting that this literature conflicted with a study of the doctoral experiences of African-American men and women, and the role that race played in their experiences before and during their doctoral studies. The study's findings revealed that race can positively impact the success of African-American graduate students rather than create potential barriers to success. This finding was contrary to the findings of some scholarly research and previous thought (Bingman, 2003). The study revealed further that the research participants gained academic and emotional support from college professors, administrators, and students of diverse backgrounds who understood the potential racial barriers that African-American students might encounter at MWIs, and that pride in being African American contributed to their success. For the research participants in this study, this did not always apply.

Prior to the research study, it was thought that confronting and challenging the features of racism during doctoral study might divert the research participants from reaching their goal of completing the doctorate. It was thought that some might have seen racism as individual acts of meanness rather than in invisible systems conferring dominance on a group (Mann & Zatz, 1998). In the short-range, people who profit the most "from privilege systems are kept most blinded to them for they interfere" with the belief that social equality has been achieved (Mann & Zatz, 1998, p. 214). In sum, the researcher thought that an encounter with white privilege and/or racism could have been an obstacle to doctoral degree attainment. However, it was anticipated and confirmed in this research study that an African-American male's motivation was instrumental in counteracting these obstacles.

Summation—Discussion of the Findings

The findings regarding motivation as described in chapter four were discussed in the section above and the researcher's analysis deemed as significant four features of motivation including religious activities, interpersonal relationships, the academic credential, and community service. It was determined that a religious foundation is helpful when pursuing a doctorate because the related beliefs and actions can serve as a support mechanism and relieve frustration, and can help the doctoral student move through self-efficacy into action. It also was determined to be significant that these men were motivated by some family members, even those who had little or no higher education background. Further, it was found to be crucial for doctoral students to have mentors before and throughout their doctoral studies. Finally, it was determined that these

men recognized the need of the doctoral credential for advancement in the higher education arena and the degree aided them in community service.

This section also addressed the challenges experienced by the research participants during doctoral study as described in chapter five. Of significance, the featured challenges that were addressed included financial pressure, time management, writing requirements, and assembling cohesive doctoral committees. It was determined that more scholarships and grant aid were needed to better help research participants combat the financial pressure of doctoral study and to lessen their work commitment to balance their time better. It also was determined that introducing the art of scholarly writing at earlier levels of education would help students become better acquainted with its characteristics and give them opportunities to practice this form of writing. It was concluded that doctoral students must be encouraged to continue to persist to achieve the doctorate when faced with challenges, even if they are challenged by situations of bias.

Conclusions: The Research Questions

Two research questions arose from the purpose of this study, the first of which was: What is the role of motivation in African-American males' completion of the doctorate? The second research question was: Of what relative importance are motivation elements such as intrinsic versus extrinsic, autonomy, competence, relatedness, identified regulation, and/or integrated regulation in the academic achievement of the African-American men in this research investigation?

Research Question #1: The Role of Motivation in African-American Men's Completion of the Doctorate

It was determined that the role of motivation for African-American men in the completion of the doctorate was two-fold. One role of motivation was to spark each man to act toward achievement of their goal, the doctorate, and the second role of motivation for these men was to offset or counteract challenges encountered during doctorate pursuit with an outcome of persistence in their doctoral programs to degree completion. These men were motivated extrinsically to pursue the goal of the doctorate and to persist in their doctoral programs in the face of inevitable challenges as described in chapter five.

"Self Determination Theory (SDT), the theoretical framework used for this study, differentiates the content of goals or outcomes and the regulatory process through which the outcomes are pursued, making predictions for different contents and for different processes" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 227). In addition, SDT uses the idea of inherent psychological needs as the basis for integrating the delineation of goal contents and regulatory processes and the predictions that resulted from those demarcations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The three psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) are important for understanding the what (i.e., content) and why (i.e., process) of the quest of achieving goals in SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT maintains that both an understanding of the psychological needs and goal-directed behavior is necessary to address psychological development and well-being, the needs that give goals their psychological stability and that influence which regulatory processes direct people's goal pursuits (Deci & Ryan, 2000). People engage in what they find important and interesting when they

experience reasonable satisfaction of their needs rather than behaving specifically to satisfy the needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

> Finding an activity either interesting (intrinsic motivation) or important (well-internalized extrinsic motivation) is influenced by prior experiences of need satisfaction versus thwarting, but doing what one finds interesting or important does not have the explicit intent of satisfying the basic needs in the immediate situation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 230).

Furthermore, the satisfaction of the three basic needs associated with Basic Needs Theory (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), as well as complying with the tenets of Organismic Integration Theory (identified regulation and integrated regulation, forms of extrinsic motivation) helped these men to persist in their doctoral studies, helped them overcome the many challenges and obstacles encountered, and moved them toward doctorate completion. For example, when challenges occurred, family members and/or mentors of the men supported them to the extent that the positive feedback received encouraged their self perceptions of competence. Even when challenges arose, research participants exhibited self-determined behavior to complete the degree. If these needs had not been satisfied, motivation would have diminished and impaired the natural developmental process causing low performance in the doctoral program (Deci et al., 1991). Furthermore, if the research participants had not identified with the roles of mentors and professors, their integration of these roles within themselves might have been impeded and achievement of the doctorate might have been prevented.

Of significance, community contribution and affiliation are considered extrinsic goals within the SDT model (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In contrast, when using the

Vansteenkiste model that takes a more encompassing view of intrinsic motivation than Deci and Ryan, these goals are categorized as intrinsic within SDT, these goals are satisfying alone, and provide enduring satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). However, using the Deci and Ryan model (2000) in this study as the theoretical framework, the research participants were extrinsically motivated since their reasons given for doctorate pursuit and experiences in the pursuit revealed examples of identified regulation and integrated regulation that were internalized.

In summary, the primary role of motivation for the African-American men in this study was to prompt them from an extrinsic standpoint to pursue the doctorate when viewed through the Deci and Ryan model. Furthermore, motivation to persevere when challenges to the goal occurred was from an extrinsic motivational nature.

Research Question #2: The Relative Importance of Motivation Elements

Extrinsic motivational elements emerged as being associated with the research question and were highlighted in the findings. In addition, the elements of Basic Needs Theory including autonomy, competence, and relatedness were addressed since the men in the study experienced satisfaction of these needs that surfaced in the findings. An analysis of the elements of Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory, including the elements of identified regulation and integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), were undertaken since these elements also rose to prominence in this study's findings. The significance of intrinsic versus extrinsic, autonomy, competence, relatedness, identified regulation, and integrated regulation in the academic achievement

of the African-American men in this research investigation will be explored in the paragraphs ahead.

Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivation.

There is a distinction in Self-Determination Theory between diverse types of motivation based on different reasons or goals that give rise to an action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Explicitly, the essential difference in motivation types is between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is naturally interesting or enjoyable while extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to an independent outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation, the most developmentally advanced form of extrinsic motivation, carry some similarity since they share the characteristic that defines autonomy, explicitly, a total involvement of the self (Deci & Ryan, 1996). However, intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation differ since behavior that is motivated intrinsically is performed spontaneously because the individual is interested in the behavior itself while integrated regulation behavior is performed freely since it is influential for an outcome that an individual considers meaningful (Deci & Ryan, 1996).

Autonomy was reflected in this study since the research participants' behavior in pursuing the doctorate was focused on the use of free choice to pursue the degree. Correspondingly, both the findings related to motivation and the findings related to challenges encountered during doctorate degree pursuit showed that identified regulation and integrated regulation (extrinsic motivation) were significant for most of the African-American men who completed the doctorate.

The African-American men in the study exercised autonomy to pursue as a goal, the doctorate, and they persevered with the support of their religious faith, family, and/or mentors through challenges to doctorate completion. These findings agree with the literature related to achievement motivation, espoused by Sagie (1994) and defined as a person's readiness to confront a challenge personally, including behaviors of calculating risks, solving problems, and striving for perfect results, which includes the time perspective (before, during, and after) relative to performing a task. In addition to agreeing with the achievement motivation literature, this study's findings revealed that the research participants' goal orientation in pursuing the doctorate reflected similar psychological satisfaction results regarding motivation as the psychological features that were evident in a research study of the academic success in African-American doctoral recipients that included attitude (one's confidence regarding his or her ability to accomplish academically), determination (direction or tendency to be focused on earning the doctoral degree), ability (academic aptitude), and motivation (goal for pursuing the doctorate) (Adams, 1999). The Adams study revealed that if a person possessed strong psychological features (attitude, determination, ability, and motivation) and strong sociological features (support system), there was a strong probability of academic success—achievement of the doctorate (Adams, 1999). Similar to the other features noted in the Adams study, this study's findings included evidence of meeting the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (addressed in the next section) that are components of Basic Needs Theory. The research participants chose to pursue the doctorate, were confident in their abilities to complete the degree based on admission to the doctoral programs, possessed the ability to complete the doctoral work, and exhibited

determination to achieve the degree. Like the Adams study (1999) identified sociological features (extrinsic features) like a support system (institutional or social elements from family, friends, institution, or finances that promote the pursuit of the doctorate), this study included support of family and/or mentors, considered extrinsic in nature.

At the start of this study, it was anticipated that two of the four SDT sub-theories, Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory, would be directly related to the study. The findings of this study validated this expectation by supporting the relevance of Basic Needs Theory and the tenets of Organismic Integration Theory with corresponding focus on extrinsic motivation. The paragraphs that follow will elaborate in some detail of how the findings reflect evidence that the African-American men in this study were motivated from an extrinsic realm (using the SDT model) to complete the doctorate.

Autonomy (Self-Determination), Competence, and Relatedness.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has as one of its sub-theories Basic Needs Theory, which addresses basic psychological needs that are innate in human life (Deci et al., 1991). These needs include autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are basic psychological needs that are inherent to human beings. "SDT maintains that a psychological need can be identified by observing that positive psychological consequences result from conditions that allow its satisfaction and negative consequences accrue in situations that thwart it," (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229). A major premise of SDT is that social contexts that support a person being autonomous, competent, and related will uphold motivated or deliberate action (Deci et al., 1991).

SDT proposes that individuals have an intrinsic tendency to explore, understand, and assimilate aspects of their environment. This tendency is the basis of

> curiosity, mastery attempts, and a variety of other intrinsically motivated behaviors that result in growth and development. It also underlies the natural willingness to internalize and integrate values and extrinsic regulatory processes that are present in the social world. Self-regulation is evident when individuals are either intrinsically motivated or have fully internalized and integrated extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1996, p. 10).

Environments supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness promote greater internalization and integration than those that prevent satisfaction of the psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In addition, the support for autonomy, particularly, will smooth the progress of the action being self-determined.

> Social contexts that support an individual's strivings to satisfy the three innate psychological needs—that is, contexts in which significant others support satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness—allow individuals to maintain intrinsic motivation and facilitate integration of extrinsic motivation. Such social contexts, in turn, promote greater engagement, deeper and fuller learning, and enhanced personal adjustment in classrooms and beyond (Deci & Ryan, 1996, p. 11).

"To the extent that social contexts do not allow satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy, they will diminish motivation, impair the natural developmental process, and lead to alienation and poorer performance," (Deci et al., 1991). Social contextual circumstances that support a person's feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are the basis for an individual

maintaining intrinsic motivation and becoming more self-determined with regard to extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Following the tenets of SDT (Deci et al., 1991), exploration of the satisfaction of these needs helped in determining whether there were common motivations among these men to complete the doctorate. It also served as a basis for combining an array of events that might not have seemed associated, and allowed specification of the related conditions that facilitated motivation, actions, and growth. The actions of the men in this study supported the literature regarding psychological needs satisfaction because they deemed achieving the doctorate as worthy, and the social contextual circumstances that supported their feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness served as the basis for their becoming more self-determined with regard to extrinsic motivation. Additional details will follow.

Autonomy (or self-determination), the first psychological need, refers to being self-initiating and self-regulating of one's own actions (Deci et al., 1991). "Motivational strategies such as rewards and threats undermine autonomy and thus lead to nonoptimal outcomes such as decreased intrinsic motivation, less creativity, and poorer problem solving," Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 234). However, satisfying the need for autonomy can be the result when choice and acknowledging feeling enhance the sense of self-initiation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The actions of the men in this study coincide with the literature related to autonomy (or self-determination) in that these men took initiative by personally starting and regulating their actions in pursuit of and completion of the doctorate. The men's action support the literature further regarding autonomy in that "to fully internalize a

regulation, and thus to become autonomous with respect to it, people must inwardly grasp its meaning and worth," (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 64). For each of the men in this study, the doctorate was perceived as meaningful to their progress and a worthy goal to achieve.

In addition to experiencing the psychological need of autonomy being met, the need for competence also was crucial in completing the doctorate. Competence entails comprehending how to obtain varying external and internal outcomes and being effective in performing the necessary actions (Deci et al., 1991).

The competence of these men was based upon their need to feel competent and self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For the African-American men in this study, it was important that they get credentialed to advance in their fields of study for the good of their communities. Many of the research participants believed that the doctorate would prepare them to assist the community at-large, and enable them to convey the wealth of information from higher education (like research findings) to the Black community in order to unravel societal problems. These findings support the literature indicating that operative collaboration with higher education professionals and with the community are important if their functional work is to be successful and sustained and if their theories are to add to improving the human circumstance (Maton, Perkins, & Saegert, 2006).

These men's actions also support the literature in how they achieved the necessary assignments and actions that led to doctorate completion. Many of the research participants revealed that the art of "scholarly writing" was challenging or the elements of its creation unclear. This finding supports the research outcomes of Johnson and Conyers (2001) and Page-Adams (1995) whose research findings targeted the support given to doctoral students from doctoral support groups. The Johnson and Conyers study

outlined an approach of counseling in support groups designed to assist graduate students cope with the demands of writing the doctoral dissertation, while the Page-Adams study exposed how doctoral support groups offer support for writing among group members.

Percy is an example of a research participant who exhibited competence by initiating and regulating his time well while pursuing the doctorate. His efficient manner of balancing time made easy his ability to work full-time, devote sufficient time to studying and performing the necessary doctoral assignments, and taking care of his social needs. His mentors made provisions for him to attend and make presentations at professional conferences, which afforded him the chance to exhibit his competence in his field and Percy's ability to get a professorial position followed by an academic administrative position after completing his doctorate also gave credence to his competence in his field.

Although the men in this study achieved the doctorate, most of them experienced challenges to their competence sometimes due to limited opportunities to participate in some scholarly activities or due to professorial bias in some manner. This finding conflicts with the literature that indicates the likelihood of a student to adopt and internalize a goal if they understand it and possess the applicable skills to thrive in achieving the goal (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Turning to relatedness, the last psychological need, entails developing safe and sustaining connections with others in one's social environment (Deci et al., 1991). Individual or multiple family members were cited as being a motivating force for completing the doctorate. Mentors were a second motivator for completion of the doctorate.

> "The primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the behaviors is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society. This suggests that the groundwork for facilitating internalization is providing a sense of belongingness and connectedness to the persons, group, or culture disseminating a goal, or what in SDT we call a sense of relatedness," (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 64).

These African-American men developed these types of connections with others in their respective social environments. The multiple relationships of these men showed that they developed secure and sustaining connections with individuals in their social environment and that these relationships served as motivational forces extrinsically for them in completing the doctorate. Most of the men in this study were motivated by their relationships with family members and/or mentors. These relationships gave support to them and/or helped them to persist in their doctoral studies when challenged during their doctoral programs.

This finding agreed with the concept of relatedness as expressed in the literature and revealed in the actions of the men in this study in spite of the fact that many experienced professorial challenges during their doctoral studies. Even in those instances, the men either had family members or mentors whose influence was strong enough to provide some motivation for them to continue their pursuit of the doctorate.

Furthermore, religious coping activities were used as an outlet in times of frustration and religious activities helped these men cope with the challenges they experienced during the matriculation in their doctoral programs. This use of religious coping agreed with a study of academic success among African-American doctoral

recipients where it was found that “reliance on spirituality, their determination, and support from faculty assisted them in overcoming their discouragement” (Adams, 1999, p. 13).

For example, Samson, who seemed to have acquired an inclusive cadre of mentors, was influenced through his relationships with several mentors in the professional, spiritual, family and close friend categories, as well as other mentors who gave advice and looked out for his best interest. His mentors in the professional realm could be considered to have provided greater influence upon his doctoral degree aspirations since they primarily possessed terminal degrees.

The research participants shared frustration with experiences of doctoral committee conflicts either through committee member conflicts or conflicts with the research participants individually. Challenges experienced with doctoral committees coupled with those of professors, individually, were viewed as grave, and of significance, because the research participants could not complete the doctorate without resolving these challenges. Additionally, some research participants expressed their shock with how some professors exhibited distrust of them as students and how some professors seemed to demonstrate bias in the manner in which they interfaced with them in class or in the way they interrogated them regarding their completion of particular coursework. While these matters were considered challenging, the research participants failed to focus on racial bias as preventing them from completing the doctorate. Instead, they continued in their studies and recognized the bias as bias, but rose above it and completed the requirements for the degree.

These findings contrasted with the literature regarding the ideal way that a committee should be formed and how it should function. According to Pedron and Evans (1992), selecting an advisor and committee includes selecting committee members who the research participant believes are supportive and who complements their advisor.

In summary, what these men had in common was how they interacted with people and related to them.

Identified Regulation.

The concept of identified regulation is a process whereby an individual identifies with a behavior, acknowledges it, and takes on a behavior's principal value thereby completely accepting the value as one of their possessions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Identification regulation lets an individual experience their preference or desire of how to behave, and a person engages in an activity more willingly when the regulatory process (like pursuing the doctorate) has become more fully a part of the self (Deci et al., 1991). These behaviors that are regulated are considered more autonomous or self-determined than are behaviors regulated by external contingencies (Deci et al., 1991).

Most of the African-American men in this study chose to pursue the doctorate because they identified with individuals with whom they knew possessed a doctorate degree and who were professors, researchers, and/or administrators in the academic profession. These men were motivated from an extrinsic aspect and more specifically, from the aspect of identified regulation as described in chapter two. For example in the study, Charles identified with people who had doctorates because they were able to teach at the university level and his goal was to teach in the academy in order to challenge and empower young people to learn. Furthermore, these African-American men were quite

willing to experience all that was required to complete the doctorate, even challenges, because it was their choice. Their motivation reflects the literature that describes identified regulation (a form of extrinsic motivation) because continued pursuit of the doctorate was performed mainly because of its instrumentality for their personal goal and succeeding in future endeavors, rather than only because it was interesting.

In addition to the above, the African-American men in this study chose to acquire the doctorate because they identified with the career, role, or type of person that they wanted to become and viewed their future role as benefiting others and/or serving the community. These men identified with an image and adopted the vision as their self-image. Their actions substantiate the literature that indicates that identification permits an individual to experience a sense of choice about what they do when determining the worth of a behavior, identifying with it, and consenting to the regulatory process (Deci et al.., 1991). Regulations that are based upon what an individual identifies with because the person has endorsed it are likely to be better upheld and to be linked to higher commitment and accomplishment (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 236). Reflecting the concept of identified regulation, the men in this study identified with the personal importance of achieving the doctorate and thereby accepted its regulation or parameters for achieving it as their own (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In summary, most of the research participants identified with those who possessed the doctorate, or who were members of the academy, and/or because they wanted to perform similar functions found in the academic ranks, and thus, they pursued the doctorate. This finding agreed with the literature regarding identified regulation because these men were motivated extrinsically to persevere in their completion of the degree and

in particular, their behavior was regulated from the aspect of identified regulation. They chose to pursue the doctorate thereby identifying with its value and acting upon their belief in their behavior by pursuing the degree. Moreover, the African-American men in this study chose to pursue the doctorate because they identified with the career, role, or type of person that they wanted to become and looked upon their future role as being beneficial to others and/or as serving the community. This confirms the literature that identification allows an individual to feel a sense of choice or decision about their actions when coming to value a behavior, identify with it, and accept the regulatory process (Deci et al.., 1991). “Regulations based on identifications, because the self has endorsed them, are expected to be better maintained and to be associated with higher commitment and performance” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 236). This is what happened for the men in this study.

Integrated Regulation.

Integrated regulation, which is the most mature form of extrinsic motivation, integrates fully the regulatory process in assimilation with an individual’s other values, needs, and identities (Deci et al., 1991). It involves recognizing the significance of behaviors while integrating what has been identified with other aspects of a person’s identity or nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In essence, when the two identifications of doctoral achievement and one’s values, needs, and identity become harmonious with each other and with the rest of the person’s sense of self, the internalization process becomes complete. Behavior is an expression of who an individual is and what is valued by the individual when the regulatory processes are integrated (Deci et al., 1991).

Upon achievement of the doctorate, most of the research participants acquired academic professorial or administrative positions or advanced in their field outside of the academy, indicating that the regulation of their behavior was not only because of their identification with individuals in the academic profession or another field, but because they had integrated the multiple role identifications that comprised their selfhood. The regulation of their behavior possibly was due to their integration of their multiple role identifications within themselves and because of their identification with individuals in the academic profession and/or their identification with leaders in other professions. Marcus is a prime example of one who did not pursue work in the academic arena, but who advanced in the professions where he had earned doctorates in two different fields of study. Believing that earning his doctorates was necessary because of how people usually form an opinion of a person regarding their competence and ability to solve problems or answer complex questions related to a field of study, Marcus integrated, effectively, his multiple role identifications (husband, father, counselor, pastor, ministerial supervisor, community leader, etc.) that comprised his selfhood.

This finding of multiple role identifications comprising a person's selfhood agreed with the literature that indicates, "Integration occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one's other values and needs" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 10). The finding also agreed with the literature regarding the internalization process becoming complete when two identifications become integrated, are harmonious with each other and with the remainder of a student's sense of self (Deci et al., 1991). In this regard, the men in this study reflected those individuals who had experienced greater autonomy in their actions

when they internalized regulations and incorporated or integrated them into their identity or personality (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, “Actions characterized by integrated motivation share many qualities with intrinsic motivation, although they are still considered extrinsic because they are done to attain separable outcomes rather than for their inherent enjoyment,” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 10). This was the case of the research participants whose actions were characterized by integrated motivation because the actions were done to attain a separable outcome, the doctorate, rather than for the degree’s inherent enjoyment.

Summary

In summary of this section, extrinsic motivation emerged as the most addressed and highlighted by the findings and of the motivational elements associated with the research question. In addition, the elements of Basic Needs Theory including autonomy, competence, and relatedness surfaced in the findings and the experience of their satisfaction was found to help African-American men complete the doctorate. Furthermore, Organismic Integration Theory, including the elements of identified regulation and integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) that rose to prominence in this study’s findings were found to be extrinsic motivators for these African-American men in completing the doctorate. A distinction was made between intrinsic motivation, which is characterized by appeal of an activity, and integrated regulation, which is characterized by an activity being personally significant for a respected outcome (Deci et al., 1991). The latter was true for the men in this study.

Crucial Considerations for Higher Education

In this section, the researcher's intent is to distill the findings further and present important considerations for African-American males pursuing and completing the doctorate. Some of these considerations warrant attention from higher education institutions if these institutions are to help support African-American doctoral students, and are implications for doctoral student success for all doctoral students in completing the degree. The considerations for higher education identified in this study included the essential role of support, the need for mentors, the need for financial resources, an African-American male's employer's acknowledgement and recognition of doctoral program demands, especially if the male worked full-time while pursuing the doctorate. Also, there is the need for the university environment to embrace diversity by judging African-American males based upon their work and refraining from ethnic and/or cultural pre-judgments.

The Essential Role of Support

A common thread arising from the African-American male research participants in this study concerned the essential role of support required to complete the doctorate. The support identified was in the area of help with writing requirements, help with assembling cohesive doctoral committees that were supportive of the doctoral student, and gaining help from professors who provided doctoral students with clear expectations, embraced diversity, and were supportive of the student. A segment of the research participants shared how they were challenged by the writing requirements and that support in the area of writing would have been a plus.

Since in-depth scholarly writing required for a dissertation was much different from the writing for which many of these research participants had been exposed, one form of support that can help individuals enhance their scholarly writing capabilities is for a higher education institution to provide campus writing centers that encompass excellent writers. In addition, higher education institutions should insist that doctoral program professors incorporate teaching students how to write in a scholarly manner rather than simply referring them to only read other dissertations, read books, and/or just to go to a writing center. In some cases, professors prefer students to adopt a certain style of writing that would be better developed by the professor showing the student how to write in that style rather than referring them to a source outside of the professor. This practice can prevent the student from beginning to write in the style developed based on the outside source, only for the professor to reject the writing.

Most of the research participants discussed another role of support needed by the research participants. They had spoken, at length, of the challenges involved in putting together a doctoral committee whereby the members got along, were supportive of the doctoral candidate, were helpful to the candidate in the development of a prospectus, and helpful in the development of the candidate's dissertation.

Doctoral committee chairs could be required to be honest about the professors with whom they work well, so that doctoral students are not delayed in their progress because of professorial personal conflicts due to differences in philosophy or personality. Another support mechanism centers on higher education institutions developing peer advice councils to help all students, and especially African-American males, to assemble doctoral committees with good chemistry.

Another support role the research participants identified focused on challenges by professors who were unclear in their expectations or who exhibited actions that could be interpreted to show that they were untrusting of African-American males. Higher education institutions should orientate their professors to provide doctoral students with clear expectations and to support their students. Earl framed the response well when he said, “Sometimes you have to say to your Chair, ‘We are in this together. If you’re going to support me, then support me.’”

As indicated in the paragraphs above, support was needed to help doctoral students with writing requirements. The literature tended to provide more examples of support in the realm of doctoral student support groups. More specifically, a dissertation support group was offered as a solution of support to help a doctoral student prevent feelings of being overwhelmed and offer strategic resources and/or materials as support since the group’s purpose is to offer its members support in completing the dissertation, oral defense, and graduation (Evans, 1996). In an article that focused on surviving the doctoral dissertation, a solution-focused approach of counseling in support groups was cited that was designed to help graduate students cope with the demands of writing the doctoral dissertation (Johnson & Conyers, 2001). This approach enlists a professional counselor to lead a support group with the focus on the process of writing the dissertation rather than the content (Johnson & Conyers, 2001). Support group members set weekly goals and report to the group the degree to which they have accomplished their goals during the previous week and their satisfaction with their achievement (Johnson & Conyers, 2001). After each individual reports their progress, each is asked, “What worked best for you in accomplishing your goals this week?” It is the researcher’s view

that this type of support group would be an asset to all doctoral programs because it lends additional support to all doctoral students, especially African-American men.

An example of a support group that encourages writing for publication among doctoral students was established at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri (Page-Adams, 1995). Support for writing among members was structured by setting deadlines for written drafts and feedback was given to members through detailed reviews that included editorial suggestions (Page-Adams, 1995). This process allowed time at meetings for discussions of substantive content and conceptualization rather than discussions of writing style (Page-Adams, 1995). A look at the most commonly cited reasons for joining this writing support group, in order of frequency (Page-Adams, 1995), helps to illustrate the essential role of support for doctoral students, especially African-American men:

- To receive feedback on the content and style of written drafts,
- To learn information from other group members about journals, the writing process, and resources for writing,
- To receive ongoing support for writing and publication,
- To have the structure of target dates and deadlines for writing, and
- To learn by reviewing other member's drafts.

In summary, the African-American male research participants in this study revealed how essential support was for them to complete the doctorate. Support was needed to help these men with writing requirements, help in assembling cohesive doctoral committees that were supportive of the doctoral student, the provision of clear expectations from professors, and for professors to lend support to them as doctoral

students. In autonomous-supportive contexts, instructors empathize with the learner's perspective, allow opportunities for self-initiation and choice, provide a meaningful rationale if choice is constrained, refrain from the use of pressures and contingencies to motivate behavior, and provide timely positive feedback (Deci et al., 1994). This type of support should be afforded to all students, especially African-American men.

The Cry for Authentic Mentors

Each research participant needed a mentor or mentors during the course of completing the doctorate. A major finding in this research study revealed that half of the research participants seemed to have more mentors (inside and/or outside the university community) who were able to help them map out a strategy to more effectively navigate the doctoral process from selecting a dissertation topic in the early stages of doctoral study to developing a cohesive doctoral committee. These participants were highly engaged with the academic activities of their Chair, usually pursued the doctorate on a full-time basis, and participated in more scholarly activities at the university. In contrast, the other half of research participants had mentors (few inside the university community and more offsite university mentors), had less time to informally work with their major professor, started their doctoral programs with specific personal educational expectations, pursued the doctorate on a part-time basis, and participated in scholarly activities on a limited basis.

Surfacing of this finding led the researcher to divide these two groups into two categories: 1) full-time doctoral students and 2) part-time doctoral students. Full-time doctoral students refer to those individual research participants who integrated into the university community in a manner that promoted interfacing well with professors,

engaging in scholarly activities, and participating in social settings with peer colleagues. Part-time doctoral students, in contrast, refer to those individual research participants who had little or no time to work with their major professor, had some conflicting interests that caused them to come to the university only when necessary whether for classes or specific university required activities, and whose commute to the campus caused them to seldom socialize with peer colleagues. Regardless to whether the research participants engaged in their doctoral programs on a full-time or part-time basis, the implication is that there is a need for doctoral programs to be modified to support, more effectively, those doctoral students who attend part-time because most doctoral students, in today's time, must work full-time and pursue continuing education simultaneously due to the economy and limited access to employment in spite of higher education credentials. This is especially true for African Americans, and moreso for African-American men.

Higher education institutions should offer more opportunities for African-American males and other doctoral students of multicultural backgrounds with scholarships in all fields of study that cover tuition, fees, book allowances, and living stipends so that these students can participate in the doctoral programs on a full-time basis. In addition, more graduate assistantships covering costs as indicated above that would make it possible for these students to engage in doctoral programs full-time rather than part-time.

It was found in a study (Williamson, 1994) that financial assistance was extremely vital to doctoral students. In addition, mentor relationships, as well as same-gender and same-ethnicity pairing of doctoral mentors and students had significant affect

on the satisfaction of minority doctoral students (Williamson, 1994). In MWIs, it is not always possible for same-gender or same-ethnic pairing of students with faculty to take place. Limited empirical research has been conducted on the impact of the interpersonal relationships of faculty with African-American doctoral students (Holland, 1993). However, in a study of the relationships between African-American doctoral students and their major advisors (Holland, 1993), five types of relationships that these doctoral students had with their major advisors were identified including: 1) formal academic advisement, 2) academic guidance, 3) quasi-apprenticeship, 4) academic mentoring, and 5) career mentoring. These relationships will be expanded in the paragraphs ahead.

Formal Academic Advisement.

Little interaction exists between students and their major advisors in formal academic advisement. These advisors only provide basic academic advice routinely ("business-like interactions") to help students advance through their doctoral program geared toward the student's educational needs. Furthermore, the relationships are non-developmental since they fail to involve nurturing or grooming of the doctoral student.

Academic Guidance.

The relationship is flexible whereby the doctoral student-advisor contact is not systematically structured and where collegial communication exists between the parties. Major advisors are supportive and understand the student along with their educational needs. These advisors provide academic-related guidance and advice to the student.

Quasi-Apprenticeship.

In this student-advisor relationship, the major advisor provides the student with educational research opportunities that are not available to all doctoral students. The

students are invited to work on projects and research work of their major advisor. Furthermore, the advisor's guidance is related primarily to the student's educational needs.

Academic Mentoring.

This mentoring relationship consist of developmental doctoral student-advisor involvements where the major advisor provides the student with individualized guidance and help aimed at assisting the student prepare for academic life in higher education. To clarify, the advisor nurtures the student's educational growth, and takes a personal interest in the student and in the student's preparation for a career.

Career Mentoring.

Career mentoring relationships are deemed the most extensive doctoral student-advisor relationship. This relationship is a developmental student-advisor involvement whereby the advisor takes a direct and focused role in preparing the student for faculty employment in higher education. The advisor also helps to socialize the student into a profession. Finally, the advisor gives special attention to the student and the student's achievement in a profession.

In summary, research participants need a mentor or mentors during the course of completing the doctorate. Half of the research participants (full-time doctoral students) had more mentors (inside and/or outside the university community). These mentors were helpful in mapping out a plan to help these students to plot a course more effectively through the doctoral process. These students also were highly engaged with the academic activities of their Chair, usually pursued the doctorate on a full-time basis, and participated in more scholarly activities at the university. The other half of research

participants (part-time doctoral students), in contrast, had mentors (a small number inside the university community and more outside the university), had less time to informally work with their major professor, started their programs with specific personal educational expectations, pursued the doctorate on a part-time basis, and participated in scholarly activities on a limited basis. The outcome was the full-time doctoral students completed the doctorate in less time than those who attended part-time. It can be surmised that their professors might have taken more of an interest in them since they might have seen them and worked with them more often.

Although this outcome would seem to be a natural result, the researcher believes that completion of the doctorate for the part-time doctoral students required more motivation since it took many of these African-American males longer to complete the doctorate. This outcome for part-time doctoral students has motivation implications and economic inferences. This finding might warrant further in-depth study in the future. The relationships identified above between African-American doctoral students and their major advisors (Holland, 1993), shed some insight into the types of mentor relationships that African-American doctoral students have had and can have with their major advisors.

The Absence (or Limits) of Financial Resources

Each research participant needed financial assistance. Money was needed to cover the cost of tuition, for living expenses, and to cover the cost of gas when commuting to a higher education institution. These African-American men had to try balancing prior financial commitments like family responsibilities and work commitments with the additional expenses that accompanied doctoral study. Although some of the research

participants had assistance from spouses to help with the financial burden, the families of the research participants were strained until the degree was completed.

Higher education institutions could assist African-American males by not only making available more opportunities for graduate assistantships and grant opportunities to them, but offering scholarships in disciplines that are outside of areas where many minority scholarships are targeted, like math and science, which target minorities to attract more minorities in those fields. More scholarships need to be made available and promoted to African-American doctoral students who major in fields like education. It is believed that this type of financial assistance would encourage degree completion.

The literature supports this belief. In a study of long-term doctoral student persistence patterns, it was found that students who received fellowships rather than research or teaching assistantships, especially if they were awarded in the first year, were more likely to complete the doctorate and in less time (Jacobson, 1992). In another study, it was also found that doctoral students who received fellowships or assistantships in the first two years of their doctoral programs were more likely to complete their doctorate unlike others who achieved “All But Dissertation” status (ABD) (Bowen and Rudenstine, 1992). Not only did this type of financial assistance help the doctoral students financially, but it helped in their interpersonal relationships with faculty. Graduate assistantships were found to facilitate the development of both collaborative and personal relationships with faculty, if the faculty and students had common professional interests, and the graduate assistantships reduced the competing demands that limited the development of faculty-student relationships (Nettles, 1990).

Furthermore, in another study, financial support with an accompanying service requirement gave students an incentive to complete the doctorate (Border & Barba, 1998). The students who received financial support with the service requirement "had more favorable experiences, more favorable outcomes, and received their doctoral degrees faster than those students who received support with no service requirement" (Border & Barba, 1998, p. 9). In yet another study, it was found that an effective way to increase the number of African Americans with doctoral degrees was to give generous fellowship support (Willie, 1991). In addition, to increase the participation of African Americans and other students of color was for predominantly white institutions to make deliberate efforts to increase their involvement (Willie, 1991).

In summary, most doctoral students need financial help. Each research participant in this research study needed financial assistance. Money was needed to pay the cost of tuition, living expenses, and other expenses incurred when commuting to a higher education institution. Balancing financial commitments incurred prior to and during doctoral study was a strain on most doctoral students. Thus, higher education's provision of scholarships in all disciplines, graduate assistantships, and more grant opportunities would be helpful to doctoral students, especially African Americans and other students of color.

The Need to Bring Employers on Board

Since many doctoral students have been in the work force for a while when they pursue the doctorate, it would be helpful for employers of doctoral students to acknowledge and recognize the doctoral program demands of the student. Doctoral students need flexibility in their employment to be able to address the assignments given

and conduct the writing necessary to complete the doctorate. If a doctoral student works for an employer that is unable to provide or will not provide flexibility for the doctoral student, it might be wise for the doctoral student to seek employment with an employer who does provide the acknowledgement of what the doctoral student is trying to do and the recognition of the doctoral program demands so that the doctoral student can balance better the many demands (doctoral program, work, and family) while pursuing the doctorate.

A review of the literature did not reveal any information regarding doctoral student employers outside of the higher education community. This outcome leads the researcher to surmise that doctoral students, especially African-American men, would benefit most by taking leaves of absence from their employer (if possible) or resign from a non-supportive employment situation to pursue the doctorate. If the employer is unable to support the demands of the doctoral student's doctoral program, the student should seek a doctoral fellowship, graduate assistantship, or other employment that is supportive in the higher education community.

In summary and as mentioned in the previous section, higher education institutions need to make more employment opportunities available for doctoral students through scholarships, fellowships, or graduate assistantships on the university campuses. In addition, higher education institutions should partner with businesses and industry to pay their doctoral students to serve as interns full-time and/or part-time, recognizing their academic demands. Simultaneously, higher education institutions could supplement doctoral students by providing a living stipend for these students.

When Bias Prevails

This study's research participants implied the need for the MWI environment in which African-American doctoral students pursue the doctorate to embrace diversity by judging African-American males based upon their work and refraining from ethnic and/or cultural bias. In some cases, professors had exhibited bias toward some research participants either by the way they interfaced with them in class or by the way in which they inquired about how they completed specified assignments.

Professors in MWIs should be encouraged to embrace students of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the lack of exhibiting inclusive behaviors should be met with professorial restrictions of working with doctoral students.

Embracing diversity can be achieved in higher education. For example, faculty members can foster deliberate inclusiveness of diverse learners in the classroom (Rovai, Gallien, Jr. & Stiff-Williams, 2007). "Teachers encourage inclusion when they assign group projects that require students to work together in and outside of class, which establishes the conditions for success" (Rovai, Gallien, Jr. & Stiff-Williams, 2007, p. 55). In order to reach out to all students, including African Americans, teaching styles are more effective if they include diverse methods (Rovai, Gallien, Jr. & Stiff-Williams, 2007). In addition, when students are taught in ways that are attuned with their learning-style preference, they tend to attain higher levels of achievement (Rovai, Gallien, Jr. & Stiff-Williams, 2007). It seems prudent to mention here that for African-American men to excel and complete the doctorate, higher education institutions, including their faculty members, need to know the African-American cultural orientation since culture influences communication as well as the learning-style preferences of all students. The

cultural orientation of African-Americans suggests that this group performs (Rovai, Gallien, Jr. & Stiff-Williams, 2007, p. 55) "best in a learning environment that includes:

- Harmony, cooperation, affect, socialization, and community,
- Relational and creative learning relevant to their own experiences,
- Learning from a global perspective that recognizes the importance of comprehensive thinking versus analytical thinking,
- Reliance on nonverbal, indirect, implicit, and informal communication."

The strategies, listed below, can add to inclusiveness (Rovai, Gallien, Jr. & Stiff-Williams, 2007, p. 67):

- Employ diverse teaching styles.
- Draw from the principles of andragogy and self-directed learning.
- Foster intrinsic motivation in students.
- Create learning communities that facilitate collaborative work.
- Provide remedial and support programs and/or support groups.

White Privilege.

Prior to conducting this research study, it was thought that the issue of white privilege would be prevalent for all of the research participants. "White privilege is like an invisible, weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 207). Many of this study's research participants (African-American males) experienced the manifestation of some of the characteristics of white privilege. White privilege has been described as an institutional set of benefits granted to individuals who, based upon their ethnic group, resemble the populace that dominates the authoritative positions in those institutions

(Kendall, 2001). The dominant group (usually identified as whites in the United States) holds the power and the authority in society relative to the subordinates and determines how that power and authority may be acceptably used" (Tatum, 1997, p. 23). In many instances, whites are known to ignore the voices of people of other races or tolerate from a cultural basis the hearing or acting of the voices (McIntosh, 1988).

One example of white privilege identified in this research study was in the case of Edward who relayed an experience he encountered in the classroom. During one of his professor's lectures, the professor made a comment about the Black church. Edward disagreed with the professor's comments and raised his hand to state his thoughts in contrast to the professor's comments. However, his comments were met with a response from the professor of dominance. The professor said, "I'm the one with the Ph.D." Edward, who admitted that he believed he didn't "play the game" in this situation, believed that his argument was worth consideration for debate since he had attended a Black church for the last 25 years at that time. Instead of the professor using the topic as a learning tool for the class, the professor's response to Edward was viewed by Edward as an act of white privilege.

Another research participant believed that his doctoral committee members did not trust him and that this lack of trust always was at the forefront of their minds. Furthermore, many of the research participants experienced difficulty with their doctoral committees. Any doctoral student might experience difficulty in working with faculty members for the purpose of mentoring through the doctoral program process. However, for these research participants, it was believed that they encountered white privilege in these MWIs whether they wished to do so or not.

Racial Bias.

In conjunction with white privilege, racism, both institutional and personal, exists on college and university campuses (Harris, 1996). The problem is enhanced further for African Americans by a shortage of role models who are African American (Harris, 1996). Elaborating on racism, Feagin and Sikes (1994) offered four relevant propositions. First, racism in these times can be understood as "lived experience." This refers to those daily experiences that encompass oppressive encounters of individuals like African Americans as they pass through conventionally white places and the oppressed individual's interpretation of the experiences. Secondly, severe discriminatory experiences are excruciating and traumatic in the immediate circumstances and after effects, and can turn out to be a collective blow on specific individuals, their families, and their communities. Thirdly, repeated racist experiences affect considerably a black person's conduct and understanding of life and the social world. Lastly, the daily racial hostility and discriminatory experiences that African Americans encounter are the basics of "the interlocking societal structures and processes called 'institutionalized racism.'"

For the African-American males who experienced some form of racism while pursuing the doctorate, confronting the aforementioned features of racism during their doctoral study might have diverted them from achieving their goal of completing the doctorate. Fortunately, for the African-American males who participated in this research study, racism did not keep them from their goals.

Some of the research participants might see racism as individual acts of meanness rather than in invisible systems conferring dominance on a group (Mann & Zatz, 1998). An example of racism that was discussed in this research study was in the case of Earl

who revealed how his Doctoral Committee Chair demonstrated a lack of confidence in his ability to complete the doctorate. Earl was offended by his Chair who he believed didn't want him in the doctoral program. His Chair said to him that he couldn't write, and failed to give any indication that he would help teach him to write in a scholarly manner. To overcome this perceived writing deficiency, however, Earl responded to the professor by asking him to teach him how to write to which the Chair told Earl that he should already know writing. "The point is that you've got to have a Chair who is willing to work with you even if you may not understand the writing," Earl said.

In summary, an encounter with white privilege and/or racial bias could have been an obstacle to doctoral degree attainment. However, for the African-American males in this research study, it is believed that motivation was instrumental in counteracting any obstacles. Specifically, identified regulation and integrated regulation (extrinsic motivation) seemed to be the major influences for most of the research participants in combating major challenges in doctoral study. Concurrently, it is the researcher's contention that each man possessed a positive sense of racial identity and could be considered to be at the fourth (internalization) or fifth (internalization-commitment) stage of development of Cross's Nigrescence Model (Cross, 1971). Operating within either of these stages of racial identity development could result in the men experiencing security with their own identity, and could allow them to establish interpersonal relationships with people of other ethnicities who respect their self-identity. Moreover, the men's level of identity could serve as a basis for them to recognize racial bias and transcend pre-judgments in those instances.

Critical Race Theory (CRT).

To further unveil an understanding of the role that white privilege and/or racial bias might have played for the research participants in completing the doctorate, some discussion regarding Critical Race Theory (CRT) is worthy of mention. CRT, which is defined as a theoretical framework focused on the transformation of the relationship among race, racism, and power, focuses on how the world organizes itself along matters of race and chain of command, and how to change it for the better (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The research by CRT scholars has revealed that "persons in power designed laws and policies that were supposed to be race-neutral but still perpetuated racial and ethnic oppression" (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 22). CRT theorists like Derrick Bell and Patricia Williams derive much of their CRT framework from historical perspectives including slave narratives and accounts of enslaved African Americans who described their circumstance. Initially, Bell used African-American slavery as a model for others, observing that slaves had no escape and they carved out humanity for themselves by continuing to engage themselves (Gates, 1997). Bell now urges those who are anti-racists "to struggle against racism in order to make their lives meaningful rather than in the hope of someday magically sweeping racism away" (Gates, 1997, p. 784). Using Bell's perspective regarding anti-racism, even when faced with white privilege or racist manifestations in their doctoral programs, the research participants did not act as though they had no escape (as some did in slavery), but they continued engagement with professors and university systems to assure that they reached their goal (achieving the doctorate).

Most critical race theorists would agree on the following propositions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). First, most people of color in the United States experience racism as part of their everyday experience. The second theme is that the "white-over-color" dominant system serves important purposes and is difficult to address (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). "Because racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it" (Delgado, 2001, p. 7). The third theme of CRT is that "race and races are products of social thought and relations" and that "races are categories that society invests, manipulates, or retires when convenient" (Delgado, 2001, p. 7). The final theme holds that because of ethnic groups' different histories and oppressive experiences, individuals from these groups might be able to convey to their white counterparts, matters that these counterparts are doubtful to know.

An analysis of the experiences of the research participants in this research study would seem to indicate that some of the research participants experienced racism as part of their everyday experience in the doctoral program. The "white-over-color" dominant system, espoused by Delgado and Stefancic, might have been designed to serve as one purpose of eliminating some of these African-American males from their doctoral programs, but this did not occur nor was it possible for any of the majority professors to manipulate their systems to frustrate these men resulting in their dropping out of the doctoral program. It is obvious that these African-American males brought their various histories to their doctoral programs and if they experienced anything considered oppressive in their doctoral programs, were able to convey to their white counterparts

reactions in a responsible way that these individuals (professors and/or peers) were doubtful to have known.

Although some of the research participants experienced manifestations of white privilege and racial bias, it is believed that motivation played an influential role in moving the research participants to doctorate completion. Furthermore, CRT, with the focus of altering the relationships among race, racism, and power, informs the researcher's analysis here. Even when there was perceived dominance by white professors over African-American males in classroom interchanges or written assignments that the research participants' primary motivation for completing the doctorate served as the fire of perseverance for these men to complete the doctorate even if it meant overcoming doctoral program challenges, choosing to struggle with and overcoming white privilege and/or racial bias, or buckling down to the long road ahead due to doctoral completion taking longer.

In summary, it was concluded that there was a need for the higher education context in which a doctoral student pursued the doctorate to embrace diversity. This could be done by critiquing the work of African-American males, providing the support they needed, and refraining from ethnic and/or cultural bias. With African Americans having access to doctoral programs at MWIs across the country, it could be thought that they had achieved greatly in the academic community. Although great gains have been realized and the research participants earned doctorates, this research study shows that African Americans still have a long way to go.

Research Participants' Advice to African-American Males Pursuing the Doctorate

The research participants shared advice with the researcher for African-American males considering or pursuing a doctorate. The researcher believes the advice to be beneficial for anyone pursuing a doctorate, and especially for African-American men. Four areas of focus for the advice included tips that were targeted at doctoral programs, coping strategies for the men while engaging in a doctoral program, approaches to take while pursuing the doctorate, and the types of skills to develop to be successful in a doctoral program. Details regarding this advice can be found in chapter five.

Suggestions for Further Research

This research study sought to enlarge the understanding of the issues and experiences related to the motivation of African-American males in the completion of the doctorate in MWIs. The findings from this study suggest additional avenues in which to conduct further research. Two such avenues are identified in the following paragraphs.

One outcome of this study focused on the "full-time doctoral students" completing the doctorate in less time than those who attended part-time. It can be surmised that their professors took more of an interest in them since they might have seen and worked with them more often. This outcome would seem to be a natural one. However, the researcher believes that completion of the doctorate for the "part-time doctoral students" required more motivation since it took many of the "part-time doctoral students" a longer period of time to complete the doctorate. This outcome has motivation implications and economic inferences. Therefore, it is the researcher's opinion that this finding might warrant further in-depth study in the future.

Additional research might be helpful in another venue. Since the majority of the research participants in this study were motivated extrinsically in completing the doctorate based upon the SDT model, the researcher believes that additional research might be warranted to determine if a large amount of African-American males concur with the finding of this research study regarding the nature of extrinsic motivation in completing the doctorate. A quantitative research study could address this phenomenon. In addition, additional research could be conducted on the amount of extrinsic motivation in conjunction with the amount of intrinsic motivation needed to help African-American males in their completion of the doctorate.

Closing Summation

Employing interpretive qualitative methods helped uncover the nature of motivation of the African-American men in this study that helped them achieve the doctorate. The experiences of these men were described and general meanings were derived that consisted of how the key relationships influenced their experiences leading to completion of the doctorate.

Using the Self-Determination Theory model, espoused by Deci and Ryan, most of the research participants in this study were motivated extrinsically (externally) to pursue the doctorate and thereby were sparked to act toward achievement of their goal because they identified with others who possessed the degree. In addition, they were motivated extrinsically through the influence of family members and/or mentors who helped them to map out strategies to effectively move through the doctoral process and to offset or counteract challenges encountered during doctorate pursuit with the outcome that these

African-American men persisted in their doctoral programs in the face of challenges to degree completion.

With regard to the theoretical framework used in this study, the elements of Basic Needs Theory including autonomy, competence, and relatedness surfaced in the findings and their satisfaction was found to help African-American men complete the doctorate. Furthermore, Organismic Integration Theory, including the elements of identified regulation and integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) that rose to prominence in this study's findings were found to be the extrinsic motivators for these African-American men in completing the doctorate. A distinction was made between intrinsic motivation, which is characterized by appeal of an activity, and integrated regulation, which is characterized by the activity's being personally significant for a respected outcome (Deci et al., 1991). This study revealed that the research participants integrated acquiring the doctorate with their sense of self since the doctorate was an outcome they desired that was personally significant, strongly extrinsically motivating them to complete the degree.

In conclusion, the researcher believes that the findings of this study suggest that strategies to support the development of self-esteem and self-efficacy at the elementary and secondary education levels are needed to help African Americans, especially African-American boys, develop to their fullest potential to prepare them for the highest levels of educational pursuit. Moreover, development of religious values and beliefs would serve as a base of support for their growth. Thus, when African-American men reach the doctoral level or other higher levels of learning, those characteristics will have matured and could serve as a motivational foundation. Correspondingly, the external

motivational force of family members and mentors could launch African-American men to a destiny of doctoral achievement.

It is hoped that the research findings of this study might assist higher education institutions in developing strategies for recruiting and retaining African-American males to pursue and complete the doctorate. It also is anticipated that the findings will provide the impetus to other African-American males to complete doctoral degrees for the purpose of increasing the number of African-American male doctorate. Finally, it is hoped the research findings will enhance the personal and professional development of African-American doctoral students, provide a research basis for developing systems to support the success of African Americans and other underrepresented student groups in the educational setting, and, support the need to hire more African-American professors and administrators for purposes of modeling professional and vocational options for African Americans.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT
TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

PROJECT TITLE: **A Qualitative Inquiry into the Motivation of African-American Males to Complete the Doctorate**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: **Denise M. Clay**

CONTACT INFORMATION: **P. O. Box 54893, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73154**
(405) 409-2464

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. This study is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma — Norman Campus. You were selected as a possible participant because you meet the requirements for the study. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

The faculty sponsor of the study is: Dr. Irene Karpiak, Associate Professor, The University of Oklahoma.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the issues related to the motivation of African-American males in the completion of the doctorate at Majority White Institutions (MWIs) with specific reference to such elements as intrinsic versus extrinsic, autonomy, competence, relatedness, identified regulation, and or integration regulation.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Engage in two interviews, which will be audio-tape recorded. The first interview should only take about an hour or 90 minutes. You initially will be asked to engage in a "clustering" exercise to uncover your motivation to complete the doctorate and how motivation elements influenced your completion of the doctorate. You will be asked to expand upon the imtems you have identified in the clustering. You then will be asked questions from an Interview Guide, which will help direct the inquiry to keep the narratives focused around discovering your motivation to the complete the doctorate. You will have the opportunity to review the initial transcribed summary of your interview to clarify information in a follow-up interview.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Because the nature of the research topic may spark some of your personal experiences (both positive and negative) prior to and during your doctorate pursuit, you may feel some discomfort during the interview process of this study. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, please let the interviewer know. You may choose not to answer any question or stop the interview process at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. Benefits may include opportunities for reflection or gaining new insights on your own doctoral study experiences.

Compensation

There is no compensation for your voluntary service.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time. There is no cost to you other than the time it takes for the interviews.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

Specifically, the data obtained from interviews in the form of notes and audiotapes will be kept in a locked cabinet at the principal investigator's home. Identifiers of first and last initials will be used to ensure anonymity. Written notes and audiotapes will be kept until the dissertation is approved for publishing. It is expected that this will take place in 5/2007.

Participants' names will not be linked with their responses unless the participant specifically agrees to be identified. Please select one of the following options.

☐ I prefer to leave my identity unacknowledged when documenting findings; please do not release my name when citing the findings.

☐ I consent to the use of my name when recording findings and that I may be quoted directly.

Audio Taping Of Study Activities:

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device/video recording device. Participants have the right to refuse to allow such taping without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

☐ I consent to the use of audio recording.

☐ I do not consent to the use of audio recording.

Contacts and Questions:

Denise M. Clay, Researcher, can be contacted at (405) 409-2464 or denise.m.clay-1@ou.edu or the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Irene Karpiak, can be contacted at (405) 325-4072 or ikarpiak@ou.edu. You are encouraged to contact the researcher if you have any questions.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

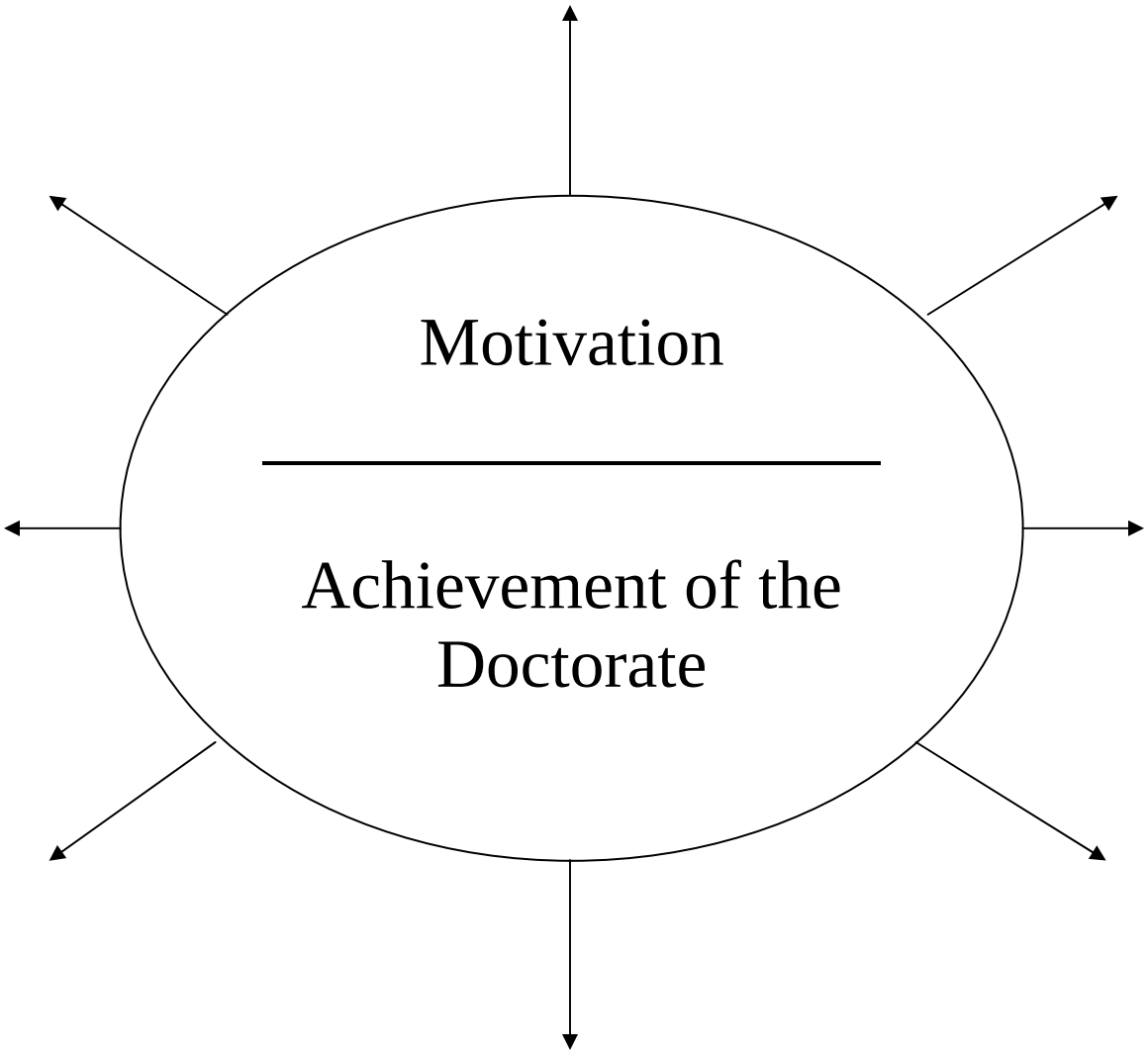
I have read the above information. I have ask2ed questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

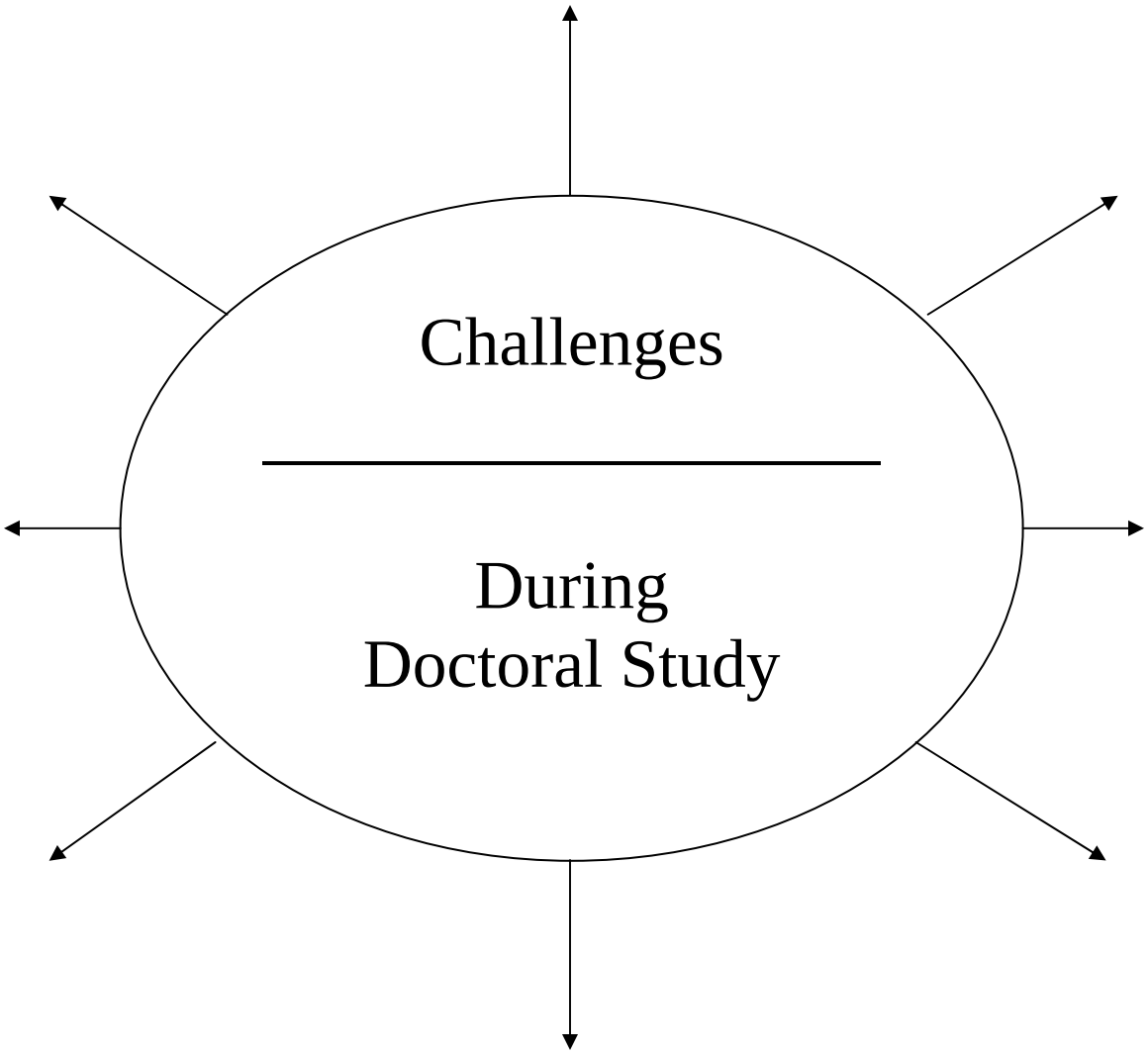
Appendix B: Cluster Map (Motivation)

Instructions: Before the interview starts, please think about the words at the center of this paper. Please cluster around the phrase, “My motivation to complete the doctorate.” This will take about four minutes.



Appendix C: Cluster Map (Challenges)

Instructions: Before the interview starts, please think about the words at the center of this paper. Please cluster around the phrase, “The challenges I faced during my doctoral studies.” This will take about four minutes.



Appendix D: Interview Process

The Interview Process will consist of: (1) Clustering around key words or phrases; (2) Transcription of the first interview by the researcher; (3) Reflections on the first interview by the research participant and researcher; and (4) Reflexivity of the process via use of an "audit trail."

Cluster Guide

- Please cluster around the phrase, "My motivation to complete the doctorate."
- Please cluster around the phrase, "The challenges I faced during my doctoral studies."

Interview Guide

- What attracted you to the field in which you completed the doctorate?
- What motivated you to complete the doctorate?
- Elaborate on whether the motivation to complete the doctorate was based upon some internal drive or external influences.
- What motivated you to choose the institution where you received the doctorate?
- What were the most important supports that you had in completing doctoral study? (Optional Probe: Were the supports individuals or institutional?)
- Describe situations that you considered to be a challenge or perceived as a threat or barrier to your achievement of the doctorate.
- Given the challenges you mentioned, how did you overcome them?
- What advice would you give to an African-American male who is considering the pursuit of a doctorate?