A Fight for Equity: School Desegregation, Public High Schools, and why African-American Males have Lower Academic Achievement

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A FIGHT FOR EQUITY: SCHOOL DESEGREGATION, PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, AND WHY AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES HAVE LOWER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT


The objective of this thesis is to examine the lowered academic achievement of African-American males since the Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas court decision that ruled in favor of school desegregation. The research shows that school desegregation was intended to allow African Americans educational equity with their White counterparts. Since Brown v. Board, there has been increased academic achievement for African-American females and lowered achievement among males. Predictions were made that poverty and low motivation affect academic achievement for African-American males. Regression analyses yielded results showing poverty and motivation were statistically significant; however, neither of the variables were a strong predictor of the outcome of academic achievement. Whether or not a student graduated from high school or whether students took any AP courses were the highest predictors of academic achievement, showing that academic achievement can be predicted more on the opportunities provided to the students, rather than poverty or motivation.

Keywords: African-American Males, Poverty, Motivation, Academic Achievement, Brown v. Board, School Desegregation
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father, without whom none of this would have been possible, to my siblings, and the rest of my family for all of their love and support, to my wonderful friends who have encouraged me every step of the way. Thank you to my thesis advisor and committee members for always pushing me to put forth my best effort in order to achieve excellence. I am thankful to God and to all of you for never giving up on me. Thank you.
Chapter 1 Introduction

Malcolm X, African-American leader and notable figure in the Nation of Islam, once stated that, “Without education, you are not going anywhere in this world.” This disheartening statement is a sad reality for many African-American male teens today in America’s urban public high schools. In America today, 54% of African Americans graduate from high school, compared to more than 75% for their Caucasian and Asian counterparts. African-American male students were nearly 2.5 times more likely to be suspended in 2000 than their peers. African-American males’ twelfth-grade reading scores are currently lower than any other racial or ethnic group. According to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, black males ages 18 and older make up 5.5% of college students, and of those who do make it to college, only one in six receive a college degree (Feierman, 2014).

The NAACP found that 1 million of the 2.3 million people incarcerated are African-American males. There are more African-American males in prison than there are enrolled in schools grades k-12. African-American males’ academic success has reached a state of emergency in this country; the time for action and change is now. The focus of this research is on the academic success for African-American males because ever since the feminization of education, the educational attainment and success for males is steadily declining. The feminization of education involves a new movement in education that we have been seeing grow over the past decade where women are having
higher levels of educational success and attainment. Women are getting higher test scores, higher reading levels, and they are now making up the majority of the population in institutions of higher education. Janet Mulvey, an assistant professor of education at Pace University in New York City, stated that America’s boys are being left behind by current practices in the classroom. Boys are dropping out of high schools in significant numbers, failing to complete college degrees, and are behaving more violently (Mulvey, 2009). African-American male academic achievement has risen and fallen over the last few decades since the infamous Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas 1954 court decision that ruled in favor of school desegregation, giving African-Americans equal access to any school of their choice.

The Brown decision overturned the Plessey v. Ferguson (163 U.S. 537[1896]) decision, which mandated state-sponsored segregation in public facilities, including public schools. The court stated that separate educational facilities are indeed inherently unequal, which then began the integration of American public schools. Brown v. Board made segregated education no longer legal, but it did not create a better educational system that conferred individual advantages on all school children, because integration in and of itself does not necessarily produce a better learning environment (Hing, 2011). Thurgood Marshall, the defense attorney for the Brown case, nor anyone else for that matter, could not predict the extent of resistance that mixing schools was to provoke among whites, but they believed that desegregating schools would lead to some larger betterment of conditions for black people (Patterson, 2001). Integration can create better
learning opportunities, but test scores show integration alone will not resolve the issue. In today’s society, most U.S. children attend schools that are racially and socioeconomically homogenous, and there is a great deal of minority isolation in classrooms (Hing, 2011).

The Brown ruling did not hinge on the inferior resources allotted to black students under many segregated educational systems. As Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Chief Justice presiding over the Brown v. Board case, pointed out in his decision, many southern officials, in an effort to forestall integration, had been investing heavily in bringing African American schools up to white standards, so that by the time the Court agreed to hear Brown, school facilities and teacher salaries in many black public schools had “been equalized, or [were] being equalized” (Hannah-Jones, 2014).

Southern officials wanted to keep education separate by making Black schools appear to have the same conditions as White schools, ignoring the fact that that still meant that the schools would be separate and, therefore, unequal. Today we are seeing a similar issue, where schools in these urban environments are suffering because African-American students are still separate from other types of students. Therefore, educational development is limited by the racial composition of schools where Black and Latino children are isolated from all other races.

Brown v. Board aided in decreasing racial oppression, but ending racial oppression and improving academic success are two different things that involve two different solutions. After the Brown v. Board case many state governments began
implementing desegregation policies and busing policies to integrate the school districts, which led to school choice plans.

Another important Supreme Court decision, Green v. County Board of Education of New Kent County (391 U.S 430 [1968]), stated that eliminating racial discrimination was not enough, and school districts were required to produce racially mixed schools to a greater degree than would be obtained from merely ending discrimination. This decision was the beginning of affirmative action remedies.

In the years following Brown v. Board, there was an increase in academic achievement of African-American males and females. However, in the past two decades, there has been a steady increase in African-American female academic achievement but a dramatic decrease in African-American male achievement. The purpose of this research is to figure out what happened to cause such a drastic shift in African-American male academic achievement.

It is important to study the effects of public schools on the academic achievement of African-American males since the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (347 U.S. 483[1954]) ruling, because it allows for further explanation as to why African-American males have lower academic success than males of other races. It allows for us to look at the past in order to examine the future. Segregation caused many disparities for African Americans that still exist today, even though it may not be legal to discriminate based on race. The desegregation of public schools was supposed to put an end to school segregation and award greater educational opportunities for students of all races, which in
most cases it did. However, if it worked in the way that it is intended to work, there would not be disparities in educational attainment between Black and White students.

Chapter 2 Literature Review & Research Question

The purpose of this research is to determine the causes for the lowered academic achievement of African-American male teens in urban low-income public high schools since the Brown v. Board of Education case. Court-ordered school desegregation policies, such as busing, since Brown have had diverse effects on the academic achievement of African-American males in low-income urban public high schools. When examining graduation and dropout rates, percentages for dropout are higher while graduation rates are lower for African-American males than ever before. African-American males are continuing to receive lower scores on standardized tests, such as the ACT and SAT, poverty rates among African-American males are on the rise, and they have some of the highest percentages of detentions and school suspensions. Therefore, the question we must ask for research purposes is why has there been decreased academic achievement for African-American high school males since the Brown v. Board Supreme Court ruling? Academic achievement, as measured by whether or not a student will qualify for financial aid based on academic achievement, will be the dependent variable. Academic achievement will be analyzed by the following hypotheses:

H1: African-American males in poor families will have lower academic achievement than White males.
H2: African-American males are less motivated than white males causing them to have lowered academic achievement.

There is a need to study the effects of low-income urban public high schools on the educational attainment of African-American males because a central component of educational reform under the Obama administration is to award more funding for public high schools in low-income neighborhoods, in an attempt to narrow the black-white achievement gap in public schools. The current educational reform policies under the Obama administration are focusing on reforming higher education by making higher education more affordable for all students across the board and challenging students to commit to at least one year of higher education or post-secondary training. Another tenet of the educational reform is a focus on early childhood education.

The Obama administration strongly believes that the formative years are crucial for later educational success, so they are pushing for higher quality pre-schools for all students across the board, they are making parents commit to being more involved in their child’s early education, and they are reforming Head Start programs to make it more effective in preparing children for early academic success. The biggest initiative under the educational reform policy is Race to the Top, which is a new program that challenges every state to allocate more funding and programs towards the betterment of those schools within the state (whitehouse.gov). The program encourages better teacher training and initiatives to keep teachers in the schools, changing of classroom structure, and the revitalization of struggling, blighted schools. The Obama Administration also
believes that teacher effectiveness and pay should not be a reflection of their student’s test scores. Students are all different; they learn differently, speak differently, come from different backgrounds, and take tests differently. It is not fair to judge teachers on their students’ test taking abilities.

The Obama administration’s main goal under the educational reform is to close the achievement gap between white students and students of color, in an attempt to achieve equal education for all. It is important to first look at public high schools and the decreased educational attainment of African-American males since Brown v. Board to understand the reasons behind the decline to see if and how the problems can be resolved, before we waste funding on a system that may not be very effective.

Reber (2010) found that before Brown, the law explicitly segregated southern schools, and many Blacks attended schools that received fewer resources than those attended by their White counterparts. In order to end segregated schools, courts began mandating school desegregation policies. These efforts increased Blacks’ exposure to Whites in schools. According to Hing (2011), researchers have found that desegregation, such as seen in Brown v. Board of Education, is one of the most direct methods for raising the educational achievement of students of color. However raising the educational achievement of students of color through desegregation does not necessarily mean equality of education for all students, specifically African-American male students.
School Segregation (Brown v. Board)

Brown v. Board of Education was the name given to five separate court cases involving segregation in public schools. The five separate court cases were Brown v. Board of Topeka, Briggs v. Elliot, Davis v. Board of Education of Prince Edward County (VA.), Boiling v. Sharpe, and Gebhart v. Ethel (BrownvBoard.org). Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education fund handled these cases when they were brought in front of the Supreme Court. In the original trial, the courts ruled in favor of the courts, after which the plaintiffs appealed the ruling to the U.S Supreme court. In 1952, the court consolidated all five of the court cases into one. When Marshall argued the case, his main premise was that separate schools for Blacks and Whites were inherently unequal, and violated the “equal protection clause” under the fourteenth amendment of the United States constitution.

After a tense legal battle and the court’s failure to make a decision, the case was put on hold and then reheard in 1953. The original Chief Justice, Fred Vinson, passed away in 1953 and was replaced by Chief Justice Earl Warren of California. It was Chief Justice Warren that finally got the rest of the justices to reach a decision in favor of Brown v. Board on May 14, 1954 (BrownvBoard.org). This decision eliminated school segregation and pushed for integration of America’s public schools. This push for integration led to court-ordered desegregation policies.

After the Brown v. Board of education ruling, many districts, especially in the South, refused to integrate their school systems. In fact it was not until ten years later
with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that most southern school districts integrated at all. For a decade, policy was little changed, but in 1964, the Civil Rights Act (CRA) gave the Justice Department authority to bring lawsuits against school districts and required non-discrimination by entities receiving federal funding; one year later, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) dramatically increased federal funding for public schools (Cascio, 2008). Black children still attended racially segregated schools, which had detrimental effects on their academic achievement. Research found that racial isolation affects African-American children’s academic achievement (Rivkin, 2000). In recent years, however, support for school desegregation has declined, because there is a lack of strong evidence that shows the school desegregation is an effective means to improve long-term academic and labor market outcomes (Rivkin, 2000).

School desegregation was a way for African-American males and females to go to schools in better districts with more effective resources. Reed (2000) stated that segregated education, not segregated movie houses or drinking fountains, was the foundation of Jim Crow. He went on to say that segregated education was the line of demarcation between oppressors and the oppressed; it policed the boundary of the racial hierarchy. Even if you were fortunate enough to be educated in one of the few excellent

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1 Jim Crow laws maintained racial segregation in the South beginning in the late 1800s. Under Jim Crow, whites and blacks drank from different water fountains, used different bathrooms and sat separately on public transportation and in restaurants. Jim Crow owes its name to a 19th Century minstrel song called “Jump Jim Crow”, popularized by a minstrel performer named Thomas “Daddy” Rice who appeared in blackface (Nittle, 2015).

2 Demarcation means to separate or set apart by distinguishable boundaries.
segregated schools, you faced severely limited horizons, which is true for present day African-American students as well. Reed (2000) found that the decision in the Brown v. Board ruling eventually destroyed the capacity of white supremacists to maintain powerful lines of social demarcation between Whites and Blacks. The physical enforcement of Brown v. Board by soldiers with guns brought down a legalized system of racial hierarchy according to Reed (2000).

Ashenfelter, Collins, and Yoon (2005) examined the income of male workers in the 1990’s and concluded that southern-born Blacks who finished schooling just before effective desegregation occurred in the South lagged substantially behind those southern-born Black students who went to school after school desegregation went into effect. In a report, Logan and Oakley (2004) described the state of segregation, desegregation, and re-segregation of public schools. The key findings were: Court-ordered desegregation involved a small share of school districts in the nation but reached a large share of Black students. Court-mandated desegregation plans have involved at least 1,094 school districts across the country. More than two-thirds of these are in the South, mostly decided by 1970. Cases in the rest of the country were more likely to be decided after 1970. A majority of Black elementary school students are now enrolled in school districts that were mandated to desegregate (75% of Black students in the South, 62% in other regions).

Logan and Oakley (2004) also found segregation within school districts, which was specifically targeted by the Brown v. Board of Education decision and subsequent
Supreme Court rulings, dropped sharply between 1968 and 1990, but little progress has been made since 1990. School segregation in 1968, before most plans were implemented, was extreme.

Progress has halted since 1990. On average, segregation scores did not change much after 1990 – rising by one point nationally, though in some large districts the increases have been more substantial. Lastly, Logan and Oakley (2004) found that the impact of desegregation has been limited in three ways, all of which result fundamentally from the policy decision to reject inter-district remedies. Metropolitan-level segregation, including separation both within and between school districts, declined very little over these three decades. White flight from districts with larger Black populations has reduced the inter-racial contact generated by within-district desegregation. Desegregation within districts has left large disparities in poverty concentration for Black and White students across districts in the same metropolitan region.

Wells and Crain (1994) found that after the Coleman Report of 1966, desegregation was given an additional social-psychological rationale, affirming that placing low-income Black students in schools and classrooms with middle-class White students would enhance their educational achievement by exposing them to better prepared and more motivated peers.

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3 In 1966 in an attempt to resolve the dilemma of education inequity Professor James Coleman and others at The Johns Hopkins University were commissioned by U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe to conduct a major study of the Question: Which strategy was more likely to equalize educational opportunities for poor minority students—compensatory education or racial integration? (NYsed.gov)
Rothstein (2013) stated that schools could not fulfill their potential so long as African-Americans were segregated, meaning, that as long as there continues to be schools with a heavily concentrated African-American majority, then the schools will never be able to reach their full potential in achieving high levels of academic success, because of the inherent disadvantages that African-American students face. He also found that integration made a difference only where Black children were integrated into the majority middle class. This showed the importance of the need to integrate schools not only according to race, but according to socioeconomic status as well, because this is where they gained the most benefits.

There have been structural efforts to re-segregate schools by not enforcing desegregation orders. School administrators modify school district and attendance policies, and come up with rezoning laws in order to ensure that certain groups cannot attend certain schools, (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005).

School segregation caused many African-American students to end up in schools with little to no resources, dilapidated facilities and inadequate teachers. School desegregation was supposed to be the end of these conditions and allow for African-American students to receive more quality education, but as we can see in current times many African-American students still have to learn in these environments, causing them to have lower academic achievement. This statement further adds to the research question as to why African-American male teens in urban public high schools are falling behind after Brown v. Board, because it shows that school segregation led to African-Americans
being subjected to inadequate school environments, which leads to lower academic achievement for them.

**Busing**

The courts began mandating busing as a way for African-American students to be bused to schools in better districts that have better resources, intended to allow for them to have higher academic achievement. One instrumental court case involving busing and its effect on academic success was, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education 1971*. This case involved the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) suing the Charlotte-Mecklenberg school district in North Carolina for failing to properly desegregate their school system. The ruling in this case mandated busing as a way to fix the racial imbalance in the school district. There was also a rezoning of the district in order to make sure proper integration was achieved (Brabham, 2006). Busing provided great opportunity for desegregation and is still used today to provide educational opportunity for all students. Armor (1972) found that there were positive results of integration, because through interracial contact, the students became more tolerant of one another. Integrated schools allow for all students to receive high-quality educational opportunities, which they would not have been awarded in segregated schools, due to the differing school environments and neighborhoods.

There was a lot of controversy over the busing of these students, because it gave the students racial contact. A 1974 case, *Milliken v. Bradley*, struck down busing
strategies that were inter-district in nature. The decision made by the court both encouraged and protected white flight to suburbia (Reber, 2005). White parents intentionally moved to the suburbs to avoid their children going to African-American schools, but busing made this difficult as Black children were being bused into suburban schools. White parents were opposed to busing because they did not want their children to have to ride to school with Black children.

Integrated schools allow for all students to receive high-quality educational opportunities, which they would not have been awarded in segregated schools, due to the differing school environments and neighborhoods. Stocia and Flache (2014) argue that parents’ preference for children to stay closer to home could have influence on segregation dynamics. Schofield (1991) believes that the stability of the overall national figures on Black segregation since 1972 is the increasing difficulty of creating and maintaining desegregated schools in numerous large urban centers. 4

School Choice

School choice was another desegregation effort that came about in an attempt to integrate the schools. Educational choice is hardly a modern innovation. In some ways, it dates back at least as far as ancient Athens with its marketplace of sophists and

4 An urban area is a region surrounding a city. This can refer to towns, cities, or suburbs. Many urban areas are very developed, meaning there is a density of human structures such as, houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways. Large urban centers are large urban areas, also known as metropolitans.
philosophers. In the Anglo-American context, explicit proposals for state-funded arrangements that would let parents choose how their children would be educated can be traced to the writings of Thomas Paine in the late 18th century, and of John Stuart Mill in the 19th century. Both men thought it appropriate for the state to ensure that young people were given at least a basic level of education — but both also felt that this aim should be advanced through private arrangements, rejecting the notion of state educational monopolies (Hess, 2010).

School choice allowed for parents and students to choose which district they wished to attend which caused more integration within the different school districts. The case for school choice was thus not argued in terms of efficiency or deregulation, but instead presented as a moral imperative — an obligation to give poor, black inner-city parents the kinds of educational choices taken for granted by suburban home owners. This "social justice" rhetoric was the mantra of the school-choice movement when Wisconsin enacted the Milwaukee voucher program in 1990; it has been the reigning justification ever since (Hess, 2010). School choice provided great opportunities for African-American students to attend finer schools, with the necessary resources for a successful educational experience. However, during the first few years after the ruling in Brown v. Board, many White southern parents who were firm in their prejudiced beliefs, rejected this ruling and tried to keep their students separate, continuing the perpetuation of White flight.
These school desegregation efforts, while in the long run allowed African-American students opportunities that they may not have otherwise had, also caused a separation in education that we still see today. Busing caused White flight, which left many African-Americans in schools where they were still the majority, and school choice caused the same because many parents wanted to keep their students in schools with their similar racial background. In the end, these efforts caused African-Americans to still not fulfill their highest levels of academic success. The public school system has not added much relief to this problem.

**Public High Schools and the Academic Achievement of African-American Males**

Public high schools provide a great opportunity for academic achievement and advancement for all students, but over the years we have seen disparities between African-American males and other students. Within public schools across the board, African-American males are falling behind in math and literacy skills along with standardized test scores. They account for higher percentages of school suspensions and other behavioral issues, as well as, higher dropout rates and thus lower graduation rates among males in any other racial or ethnic groups, including White students.

Early federal court decisions in school desegregation placed little emphasis on public school facilities; they focused more on getting Black and White students to attend the same schools (Hunter, 2011). Therefore, desegregation helped integrate the students but did not necessarily aid in fixing the public school structure. We have to examine
critical elements of public schools that could affect the academic achievement of African-American males, such as, school structure, neighborhood environment, resources, and teacher training/ readiness in public schools.

**Public School Structure**

In the poorer neighborhoods where a disproportionate amount of Black teens live, Black students tend to have a lower percentage of graduation rates than White students. Schools attended by Blacks and Hispanics experience a high turnover of teaching and instructional staff. They also have a high number of uncertified or provisionally licensed teachers, and limited access to technology. They have few educational specialists and resources, such as, advanced placement classes, limited extracurricular opportunities, and dilapidated physical environments (Rothstein, 2013). On the other hand, schools attended by majority White students have schools in suburban and rural areas, as opposed to urban and impoverished areas, have high-performance schools, and their staff holds higher degrees and certifications.

Ashenfelter, Collins, and Yoon (2005) found that by 1960 southern Black teachers had an average of 15.8 years of education (median 16 years) compared to White’s average of 15.7 (median 16 years). The differences among teachers between the educational attainment, cultural competence, and readiness within the different school districts foster an environment of education inequity for students. In the 60’s in the South, primarily African-American teachers taught African-American students; only White
teachers taught few African-American students. This caused the students to lag behind their White peers, because they were taught by less trained teachers. This trend still continues in many urban public schools today, where ill-equipped teachers with inadequate resources are teaching students. Schools in suburban or rural areas on average have more skilled teachers for their students. Beyond that, they have high technological resources, laboratories to conduct both social and science research, they have advanced placement programs for students to earn college credit, and they have newer facilities (Rothstein, 2013).

Hudley (2013) found that mathematics classes in high-poverty high schools are twice as likely to be taught by a teacher with a credential other than mathematics. In urban high schools, they suffer from deficient supplies, materials and opportunities to learn, and deteriorating physical facilities, which diminish student engagement and performance (Hudley, 2013).

Studies of schools changing from white, segregated schools to integrated schools have reported that teachers and staff received little preparation or training for educating in integrated settings (Schofiled, 1991), which then led to reduced achievement. Advanced Placement classes enroll only token numbers of Black male students, despite the College Board urging that schools open these classes to all who may benefit. In districts with selective, college-preparatory high schools, it is not uncommon to find virtually no Black male students in those schools (Holzman, 2010). Holzman (2010) also
noted that the national percentage of Black male students enrolled at each stage of schooling declines from middle school through graduate degree programs.

Low-Income public high schools, specifically public high schools in urban environments, establish an environment that is not structurally and culturally capable of achieving academic success for all students. In urban environments, public high schools suffer from old and sometimes blighted facilities, outdated textbooks, few technological resources, ineffective teaching staffs, and lack performing arts and music programs. All of these issues result in low academic achievement for enrolled students. The academic achievement disparities are even greater for enrolled African-American males due to the cultural and economic stress placed on them both inside and outside of the school environment.

African-American males undergo higher levels of stress within the family, community, and school environments than their female peers, which could suggest other factors behind their lower levels of academic achievement. Coleman (1966) found that the achievement of minority pupils depends more on the schools they attend than does the achievement of majority pupils. He also found the Whites are less affected by the quality of their schools, than are minority pupils. He found a strong correlation between school racial composition and quality, and low academic achievement for African-American males. He showed that the racial composition of the schools was more influential in academic success for the students attending those schools, as opposed to the quality of those schools.
Figure 1 shows the percent of low-income students in U.S. Public Schools in 2013.

According to the figure we can see that the majority of low income students are concentrated in public schools in the South and Southwest regions of the United States. Southern states tend to have a higher concentration of minorities and segregated school systems, resulting in high numbers of low-income students in their public school systems.

-Public School Resources

Schools and districts that have the highest percentages of disadvantaged students also tend to have the least access to the resources needed for all students to succeed.
Thus, White males in schools and districts with large percentages of Black male students are also likely to experience poor outcomes because of systemic decisions not to commit resources to those districts and schools (Holzman 2010).

Within these schools, there are inadequate resources that are essential to school success for these students. These schools are old, overcrowded and ill kept. According to Holzman (2010), these students receive watered-down curriculum, due to inadequate funding, which causes them to have lower academic achievement in comparison to their peers in successful suburban schools. Lack of computers or updated systems, outdated and tattered textbooks, lack of music and arts programs, and inexperienced and ill-trained teachers, are all evidence of the lack of resources in some public schools.

- Teacher training/ Readiness in Low-Income Urban Public Schools

Often times in low-income urban public schools, there are an alarming number of inexperienced and ill-trained teachers. These school districts surrounding low-income urban public schools hire people who are fresh out of school, with little-to-no experience or cultural training, which makes for ill-prepared teachers who do not have the competencies to deal with disadvantaged students and provide them with a quality education. Johnson et al. (2004) found that many schools serving large numbers of low-income students fail to provide new teachers with the support they need to do their jobs
well. Teacher retention is also difficult in some public schools because most teachers cannot handle the working conditions or the students.

Teachers in these urban public schools also often lack cultural training and understanding, so they are unable to cater to the diverse needs of their students. Johnson et al. (2004) stated that because these schools offer significantly less support to the new teachers that they hire, the schools demonstrating the most acute need for skilled teachers are, by their estimation, least likely to succeed in attracting and retaining them. The schools in these low income urban areas that are failing to attract and retain teachers because of their lack of support, experience lower levels of academic achievement as a result. Lankford, Loeb, and Wycoff (2002) found that schools with a higher percent of minority students may benefit from having teachers with similar racial and ethnic backgrounds, but they then go on to note that these teachers may have attended lower ranked undergraduate institutions and may score lower on teacher exams than other teachers of similar quality. Due to these teachers’ test scores and school rankings, they get placed in schools with higher minority concentration, typically located in low-income urban environments, and where academic achievement among its students tends to be lower. Students in these schools in low-income urban environments are at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers in higher income school districts, because the quality of their teaching is lower.

Lack of adequate resources, blighted facilities, lack of teacher training and readiness in urban public high schools all contribute to the decline of African-American
male academic achievement. Another factor that contributes to the decline of African-American male achievement is the environment of the African-American male student. Our environments play a major role in our development and socialization, and when there is social disorganization, or a break down in social order resulting in isolation, within an environment, the academic achievement of these students suffers.

**African-American Male Poverty/ Neighborhood Environment**

Socioeconomic status and neighborhood environment are intertwined because the determination of what type of neighborhood (urban or suburban) you reside is often affected by socioeconomic status. Living in a low-income blighted urban environment has a direct effect on social disorganization, which involves disorganization among residents in urban areas due to the nature of their environment. Residents experience gang violence, gun violence, and substance abuse, which have a direct effect on their involvement with crime. The home environment can also play a role, as most of our socialization occurs within the home. If there is substance abuse, violence, or drug use in the home, a person is more likely to carry out those same types of behaviors. This type of environment has a detrimental effect on the educational attainment of those who reside within it. Within low-income neighborhoods, educational attitudes are more unenthusiastic as opposed to middle-income and upper-income neighborhoods. Residents within these neighborhoods have lower levels of educational attainment, so there is a lack of educationally motivated students residing in these communities. Social scientists have
compared academic achievement between Black and White students in urban and suburban school. According to Pellerin (2005), one difference may be found in the composition of the student bodies in American school districts. Busing has brought about “education flight” to escape federally mandated school integration in many of the school districts across the U. S. Table 2.0 shows the selected characteristics of schools in the fifty wealthiest and poorest urban and suburban school districts from 2005-2006.

According to the data in Table 2.0, the greatest distributions of minority students are found in the fifty poorest districts. Schools in poor districts have higher student-to-teacher ratios, so students receive less individual attention from their teachers as opposed to the wealthier districts. This is a growing issue and a great source of low academic success for students in those districts. In poorer districts, as shown by the data, there are larger student populations but lower graduation rates. Schools in these poorer districts have large numbers of students, often times crowded schools, and their graduation rates

| Table 2.0 Selected Characteristics of High Schools in the Fifty Wealthiest and Poorest Urban and Suburban School Districts, 2005-06 |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **School Characteristics**                       | **Fifty Wealthiest districts**                    | **Fifty poorest districts**                       |
| Share of minority students                       | 16.1                                             | 89.8                                             |
| Share of schools with a student-teacher ratio of 16 or more | 33.4                                             | 49.6                                             |
| Share of schools with 1500 or more students      | 36.4                                             | 58.6                                             |
| Graduate rate                                    | 96.0                                             | 64.0                                             |

are substantially lower than schools in better districts.

Due to institutionalized racism and oppression of African-Americans in society, it is difficult to create desegregated schools in these urban environments where the majority of African-American males reside. Residential segregation patterns cause extreme disparities and hindrances for African American students who live in impoverished areas because they are less likely to be fully engaged in school as some of their more economically stable peers.

Massey (1996) argues that with the growth of gated communities for the affluent and the further ghettoization of the poor, the United States is becoming more and more fragmented. Students attend schools in the neighborhoods in which they live for the most part, so if the student lives in a racially homogenous environment, they are likely to attend schools of the same nature. The whole notion of hypersegregation due to residential discrimination plays a major role in school segregation. African-American neighborhoods are isolated within cities, poverty-stricken and possess limited resources.

There is a lack of adequate shelter, limited funding for city repairs or aid, unemployment is high so there are a lot of poor people living in these areas, and there is limited amount of food resources. Consequently, the schools that are within these neighborhoods share the same conditions that result in inadequate schools and low academic performance.
An even wider concern is that across various dimensions of difference, such as racial and ethnic background, class, and life cycle, Americans are withdrawing, willingly or not, into homogeneous and defensive enclaves. Racial segregation and housing discrimination are causing the isolation of African-Americans into poorer neighborhoods.

Iceland, Weinberg and Steinmetz (2002) operationalize their concept of racial segregation by incorporating Massey and Denton’s (1996) measures of racial segregation: evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization, and clustering. Evenness refers to the differential distribution of the subject population, how evenly spaced are these groups within their given population; exposure measures the potential contact between groups; concentration is the relative amount of physical space occupied; centralization involves the degree to which groups are located near the center of an urban area; and clustering measures the degree to which minority group members live disproportionately in contiguous areas. Students who live in impoverished areas are less likely to be fully engaged in school as some of their more economically stable peers because their parents may not have had the best educational experience because of their circumstances, so the values on education would not be as strong in their household, causing a cycle of school disengagement.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) define poverty in two terms, absolute or relative. Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as, food, clothing, and shelter. It is when a family’s income fails to meet a federally established
threshold that can differ across countries, whereas relative poverty involves the relationship to the economic status of other members of the society, meaning, where you are in comparison with everyone else in society: in essence it is the class system (UNESCO, 2010).

Noguera (2003) stated that the effects of growing up in poverty, particularly for children raised in socially isolated, economically depressed urban areas, warrants greater concern, especially given that 1 out of every 3 Black children is raised in a poor household. Noguera (2003) also says that some schools are sites where Black males are marginalized and stigmatized, and Black males are more likely to be labeled with behavioral problems and as less intelligent even while they are still very young. Hannon (2013) found poverty causes higher rates of delinquency which affects educational achievement negatively. Inner city youth experience natural disadvantages in performing well in school because of their environments.

The poor youth have less room for mistakes. They have to work twice as hard in order to try and accomplish educational excellence and employment because of the disadvantages that were already set in place early on.

Pellerin (2005) found that African Americans and other students of color have higher numbers in schools with a higher concentration of minorities. There is no support for public schools from upper-income and middle-income families, because they would rather place their teens in private schools where the population is majority White. In urban public schools, many students and their families are at an economic
disadvantage according to Hudley (2013). She found that 64% of students receive free or reduced price lunches, indicating that their families are at or near the federal poverty level.

Table 2.1 shows the breakdown of school characteristics in relation to race and ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent School characteristic</th>
<th>All students</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaskan Native Students</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander Students</th>
<th>Hispanic Students</th>
<th>Black Students</th>
<th>White Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority concentration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-25% minority</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50% minority</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75% minority</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-100% minority</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10% minority</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-100% minority</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>-34.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the data in Table 2.1, Black and Hispanic students are in schools with high minority concentrations, whereas their White peers are located in schools that are majority racially homogenous. White students have a higher percentage of free and reduced lunches, but Black students are in a close second. White students have higher numbers of free or reduced lunches because they are more of the majority population. There are similarities between Tables 2.0 and 2.1 in regards to school size and teacher-
to-student ratio. Black students are located in schools with larger student populations and higher student-to-teacher ratios.

Ashenfelter, Collins, and Yoon (2005) discovered through their research that while school resource disparities contribute to lower educational attainment for African-American students, it is the family’s economic resources that cause the greatest disadvantages. Their data showed that a family’s annual income determines the academic success of the student. African-American families tend to have lower annual income than their white counterparts, which puts them at greater disadvantages academically. Lower educational attainment equals lower potential earning income throughout a person’s lifetime, which contributes to the current economic state of many African-American families and their children. African-Americans attend schools that tend to be more populated than other schools, and have a higher teacher-to-student ratio than White students.

Goldsmith (2003) found that students in predominantly Black and Latino schools are less likely to earn a high school diploma or equivalent, or to earn a bachelor’s degree or more, than similar students in predominantly White schools. Goldsmith, in his perpetuation theory, believed low educational achievement for many Blacks and Latinos was due to them being segregated across institutions over their life-course, and as a result they do not develop the same networks as White people, networks that involve high status knowledge. New research in the educational attainment of African-American males looks beyond income disadvantage as the causation of low academic success and
attributes low success to low student motivation, parental involvement, and cultural mistrust.

**Low Student Motivation/Parental Involvement / Cultural Mistrust**

Terrell and Terrell (1981) define cultural mistrust as the tendency for African-Americans to distrust Whites in institutional, personal, or social contexts. This socialized mistrust, stemming from years of systematic oppression, leads to low motivation and low educational expectancies for many African-American students. Stephan (1978) found through social scientist testimony during the Brown v. Board of Education trials that, the self-esteem of Blacks is low in segregated schools, and segregation leads Black children to be prejudiced toward Whites. Self-esteem and prejudice affected the school achievement of minority students.

Children in segregated schools suffered emotionally and psychologically due to differing conditions and treatment. Stephen (1978) derived a conceptual model from the social scientist testimony in Brown V. Board of Education, which is demonstrated in Figure 2.

As demonstrated in the causal model in Figure 2, White prejudice towards Blacks leads to Blacks having low self-esteem, which leads to low Black achievement, which leads to Black prejudice towards Whites. This cycle was made evident in the Brown v. Board testimonies, which helped in the desegregation efforts. The testimonies made in
the individual court cases all targeted how segregation leads to low black achievement, thus urging the court to push for the desegregation of public schools. While schools in present day are legally desegregated due to the ruling in Brown v. Board of Education, there are still many disparities between schools in different districts. These disparities are restricting the social mobility of African-American males in society.

Their restrictions on their quality of education and their level of educational attainment have detrimental effects on their occupational and income potential, which ultimately affect their later life outcomes and wellness.

Low student motivation and lack of support from parents is common in urban environments where parents of students may not have achieved high levels of academic achievement, so they are not as active or supportive of their child’s educational success. Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, and Doan Holbein (2005) found that parental involvement

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Figure 2

![Diagram](attachment:diagram.png)

5 Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups in social positions over time.
generally benefits children’s and adolescents’ learning and academic success. Parental values on education affect student values on education, which then affect their motivation to finish high school. They go on to say that low income parents with low educational attainment leads to truncated educational values being passed down, which then results in lowered academic achievement.

It is also important to note from their findings that parental support and involvement leads to a student acquiring self-confidence in their educational endeavors. This leads to persistence when faced with academic challenges, independent learning, and causes students to strive to create new challenges for themselves academically, such as getting all A’s or getting into college. This creates a cycle of low academic achievement within the African-American community. Due to this, dropout rates and graduation rates among African-American high school teens is at an all-time high.

**Dropdown/Graduation Rates (Across Race and Gender)**

Research on high-school dropout prevention suggests the need to examine school transitions and the effect they have on students. In high school transitions, teens do not receive the right amount of support that they will need in terms of increased academic, organizational, and social demands, in order to be as successful as they can (Somers, Owens, & Pilawsky, 2004). Greene and Winters (2005) found that high school graduation rates for African-Americans remain less than 60% nationally, and in many large, urban districts, completion rates are far worse. According to Williams, Davis, Miller-Cribbs,
and Williams (2002), males drop out of school at slightly higher rates and consequently females are more likely to have completed high school. They continue on to say that these differences in educational experiences by gender seem to begin in early childhood. Elementary school boys typically receive lower grades in reading and misbehave more often and intensely than girls. Figure 3 demonstrates the national percentages of Black college graduation rates in comparison to all students, according to data from the United States Department of Education.

Figure 3

![National College Graduation Rates](image)

(Source: United States Department of Education)
According to Figure 3, Black males have a graduation rate of only 33.1% in comparison to the 57.3% rate for all students, and females have a rate of 44.8%. These numbers are alarming and deserve immediate attention. This figure also demonstrates the feminization of education, which was mentioned earlier showing how women are beginning to have higher levels of educational attainment and academic success than men.

Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Tobar (2007) found that only 1 out of every 3 young black male high school dropouts was able to obtain any type of job during an average month in 2005. This should be viewed as particularly distressing since many of these young men will end up being involved in criminal activities during their late teens and early 20s. Holzmon (2010) found that more than twice as many Black male students as White male students receive out of school suspensions and three times as many Black male students as White male students are expelled. Out-of-school suspensions in many cases lead to students ending their school careers before graduation. Holzmon (2010) also found data on graduation rates for 2008 by state, which showed vast disparities between Black and White males. In the State of Ohio for example, the graduation rate for African-American males was 41% opposed to 78% for White males. This is an alarming gap in graduation rates for just one state.

Policy makers and school boards should be uneasy with this vast disparity and making amendments to their current educational policy. Holzman (2010) found that despite efforts to change the national average of African-American male graduation rates,
African-Americans are still significantly falling behind their peers in graduation rates due to systematic racial and economic inequalities. Increasing graduation rates and the overall academic achievement of African-American males continues to be a long, tedious, and impervious process, but it is imperative that the fight for educational equality continues until change is made. Low graduation and high dropout rates not only negatively affects African-American males educational attainment but also affects their wage earning potential in the future. Low educational attainment along with low wage earning potential results in poverty for many of these African-American men.

High school dropouts or those African-American males who do not attend school subject themselves to a greater likelihood of being incarcerated in their lifetimes, opposed to those who attend school and graduate. African-American male incarceration rates are at an all-time high and enrollment in schools is at an all-time low, further adding to the lowered academic achievement of African-American males.

**African-American Male Incarceration**

African-Americans, especially African-American males, are often overrepresented in prison populations due to institutional and systematic inequalities within the criminal justice system. Mauer (1999) found that African Americans are more likely to be victimized by crime than other groups, and that the dramatic rates at which African-American males have come under some form of criminal justice supervision has created a complex set of consequences which affect not only individual victims and
offenders, but families and communities as well. Through his research, Mauer (1999) found that 49% of prison inmates nationally are African American, compared to their 13% share of the overall population; nearly one in three (32%) of Black males between 20-29 is under some form of criminal justice supervision on any given day, whether it be prison, jail, probation or parole. He also found that a Black male born in 1991 has a 29% chance of spending time in prison at some point in his life, compared to just 4% for white males and 16% for Hispanics. People who live in poverty live in blighted neighborhoods with immense social disorganization.

People who live in poverty have access to limited resources, which usually results in criminal behavior. The Lectric Law Library defines crime as a wrongdoing classified by the state or Congress as a felony or misdemeanor. It is an offense against the public law (The Letric Law Library, 2014). People who violate any law are considered to have committed a crime. Most of the law breaking occurs in poverty stricken neighborhoods, where unemployment is high, drug and substance abuse are present, and there is gang violence.

Mauer (1999) found that in 1954, at the time of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, African Americans constituted about 30% of persons admitted to state and federal prisons, which in the context of the time is alarming due to the fact that the percentage was substantially higher than the black share of the national population, a trend that still continues today. According to the NAACP criminal justice factsheet, one in three black males born today can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime.
Nationwide, African-Americans represent 26% of juvenile arrests, 44% of youth who are detained, 46% of the youth who are judicially waived to criminal court, and 58% of the youth admitted to state prisons (NAACP.org). These alarming numbers of African-American male youth getting arrested are causing great strain in other aspects of their lives, such as, education. African-American school enrollment continues to decline while their incarceration rates continue to rise, causing low national educational attainment for African-American males.

In addition to high incarceration rates, African-American males also have high rates of suspensions and detentions within schools causing lower academic achievement. Many students get suspended multiple times over the course of the school year, as demonstrated in Figure 4.

![Figure 4](source: Urban Strategies Council)
From the data in Figure 4, we can see that African-American males have drastically higher percentages of multiple and one time suspensions in comparison to other males. African-American males have a rate of 18% of suspension compared to 6% of other males, and they have a rate of 9% for multiple suspensions compared to just 2% for other males. These numbers should be a cause for concern for the educators and administrators within these school districts.

Research shows that three offenses account for 75% of all suspensions of African-American male students: disruption-defiance of authority, causing or threatening injury, and profanity-vulgarity. The data is demonstrated in figure 5.

![Figure 5. Top Reasons for Suspensions]

(Source: Urban Strategies Council)
More and more African-American male students are being expelled or suspended for bad behavior or failing grades than ever before, while their graduation rates are declining.

Another possible explanation for the decline in the academic achievement of African-American males, which will not be thoroughly explored in this research, but serves as another cause of lower academic achievement of African-American males is their overrepresentation in special needs programs at schools.

**African-American Male Special Needs Placement in Public High Schools**

There has been a great deal of recent research and literature on the disproportionate placement of African-American children in special needs classes. Cartledge and Dukes (2008) stated that disability diagnoses are likely to result in lowered expectations, thereby reducing special education simply to a place where students are sent when they do not perform rather than a service elevating learners to higher levels of performance. Donovan and Cross (2002) broke down special education placement by race/ethnicity: 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 11% Hispanics, 12% Whites, 13% American Indian, and 14% Blacks. Cartledge and Dukes (2008) found that the disproportionality of African Americans in special needs placements occur in high incidence areas: learning disabilities (LD), emotionally disturbed (ED), mild mental retardation (MMR), and speech language disorders.

They found that African Americans make up 17% of the general pupil population but comprise 33% of all the students assigned to programs for the mentally retarded.
They reaffirmed that not only are African-American students overrepresented in special education programs, they also tend to receive the most restrictive educational placements and they are less likely to be educated in settings where they access general education conditions and curriculum. They found that African-American males are more likely to be placed in special needs education than females for three reasons. The first reason being, biological factors; males are more prone than females to certain physical conditions that are likely to lead to disabilities. Second, externalizing behaviors, where males tend to be more active and disruptive in the classroom. Lastly, referral bias as referring teachers may have unrealistic expectations of males (Cartledge & Dukes, 2008).

Cartledge and Dukes (2008) discovered that poverty, which affects African-American children, is considered to be a major factor in the overrepresentation of African-American children in special education. Watkins and Kurtz (2001) found that nearly half of African-American children are reported to live below the poverty line. Donovan and Cross (2002) believed that poverty creates stress factors that suppress cognitive development and that impoverished children are more likely to attend schools that often provide less adequate teachers and fewer resources. Educators within these economically disadvantaged school systems are often ill-trained or ill-equipped to handle the needs of their students, so when a student may not be performing up to their standards or has some behavioral issues, they often misdiagnose them and recommend them for special needs placements. African-American males have high rates of behavioral issues in
schools, which also often lead to being disproportionately placed in special education, which ultimately leads to lower academic achievement.

Wells and Crain (1994) believe that in order to assess the impact of school desegregation policy on the status attainment of African-American adults, researchers and policymakers need to look beyond the short-term effects, especially standardized test scores, and focus more on long-term social and economic outcomes. They go on to say that educational attainment alone does not solve the problem of economic inequality. School desegregation must do more than raise black students’ test scores; it must also break the cycle of racial segregation that leaves blacks and whites worlds apart (Wells & Crain, 2004). From the literature we can see that school desegregation does not necessarily equal equality. School desegregation set up a new framework for greater educational opportunities for African-American students, but the implementation of the plan did not effectively produce educational equity for all students across the board.

A conceptual model of my variables has been constructed in order to demonstrate the relationships between them and to demonstrate how neighborhood environment, socioeconomic status, behavioral issues, incarceration, and special needs placements have affected the academic achievement of African-American males represented in Figure 6.
Figure 6
Conceptual Model of the Effects of Neighborhood Environment, Socioeconomic Status, and Student Motivation/Support on Academic Achievement

Neighborhood Type/environment
Urban
Suburban

Neighborhood Environment
Limited Resources
Teacher readiness

Socioeconomic Status
Upper middle class
Middle Class
Working Class
Poor

Motivation School
Disengagement
Low Motivation
Poor academic performance

High School Performance
Academic Achievement
Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

This research will be based on two theoretical frameworks, social disorganization theory and the feminization of education. The social disorganization theory comes from the Chicago school of sociology in the early 1920s and can be defined as the decline of influence of existing social rules of behavior upon individuals within a group (Wong 2000). Social disorganization theory got its start beginning in 1909 when Warming, a plant biologist, proposed that plants live in “communities” with varying states of symbiosis, or natural interdependence. He found that communities containing plants predominantly of the same species were more in competition with nature than with each other, whereas, communities with several different species competed for limited resources more among themselves than with the environment (Miller, 2009).

Guerry in 1833 took this study a step further and compared crime rates in 86 departments (counties) in France from 1825 to 1830, which showed that crime rates had marked variation in different cities in the country. In other words, he found that crime rates were higher in certain areas in the country than others. In 1925, Burt explored the relationship between a city’s central district and juvenile delinquency, finding that areas in London with the highest rates of delinquency were located adjacent to the central business district (Miller, 2009). Park and Burgess’s, notable scholars of the ecology of crime and disorganization, took Burt’s study one step further and suggest that it is the neighborhood and environment that fosters social disorganization and crime not the
criminal. Their model, demonstrated in Figure 7, shows the location and relationships of the five concentric zones of urban space based off of the city structure of Chicago.

Figure 7. Concentric Zone Model

The Concentric Zone Model:

1. Central Business District
2. Transitional Zone
   **Recent Immigrant Groups**
   —Deteriorated Housing
   —Factories
   —Abandoned Buildings
3. Working Class Zone
   —Single Family Tenements
4. Residential Zone
   —Single Family Homes
   —Yards/Garages
5. Commuter Zone
   —Suburbs

(Source: Criminal Justice Program of Calvin College)

Zone 1, the Central Business District, is where most of the tertiary employment is located and where the urban transport infrastructure converges, making it the most accessible. Zone 2, the Transitional Zone, is where many industrial activities are located
to take advantage of nearby labor and markets. There is deteriorated housing, factories, and abandoned buildings, the inner city. Zone 3, the Working Class Zone, is characterized as having the poorest segment of the urban population because of first generation immigrants living in the lowest of living conditions. Zone 4, the Residential Zone, is occupied by the working class, and is located near employment opportunities, making it affordable for the people that live there. Zone 5, the Commuter Zone, also known as the suburbs, has a higher quality housing, good neighborhoods, and high employment rates (Rodrigue, 2008). The environment produces criminals that commit crime. This figure shows the covarying relationship between socioeconomic status and neighborhood type/environment.

Sociologists Clifford Shaw and Henry D. Mckay developed the theory into what we know today in 1942. In essence, social disorganization is the consequence of a community's inability to realize common values and to solve the problems of its residents, resulting in the breakdown of effective social control within that community. Social disorganization stated that low educational success was not caused at the individual level, but was considered to be the normal response of normal individuals to abnormal social conditions. They developed their theory from the urban ecological characteristics: 1) Physical status, 2) Economic status, and 3) Population status.

In terms of physical status they found that high disorganization occurs within areas that are physically deteriorated, near areas of heavy industry, and populated with highly transient residents. In regards to economic status, he found that, affluent areas
have more social control and less disorganization, whereas, low affluent areas have more disorganization because of the diversity of its residents. Finally, population status has an impact on social disorganization because, delinquency in low income areas becomes competitive due to the high concentrations of people in these environments. Resources become scarce and limited, so everyone is in competition for them, causing disorganization (Miller, 2009). Social disorganization also has adverse effects on educational outcomes for the residents in these disorganized communities. Many residents in these low affluent communities, have lower educational attainment, earn lower wages, and are more involved in deviant and criminal behavior.

Roach (2004) found that according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the average Black 12th grade student’s proficiency is roughly the same as the average White 8th grader. Social disorganization theory can be effective when trying to understand the social issues surrounding the achievement gap between black and white students. Madyun (2011) describes how the different factors of social disorganization contribute to understanding the achievement gap in education research. He broke social disorganization theory into the following factors:

Factor 1: *Family Composition (single parent households)*. He found that having fewer two-parent families in a community typically result in less adult supervision and fewer role models to attribute to positive educational attitudes.

Factor 2: *Residential Mobility*. Population turnover reduces the probability of long-standing relationships, which results in weaker social ties (relationship to a potential
resource). Social ties can be strong (close, frequent relationship) or weak (distant, infrequent relationship). Population turnover also results in less social capital (the actual and potential resources embedded in social ties that can be used to achieve an outcome), poorer quality resources, and lack of access to resources and opportunities.

Factor 3: *Racial Diversity*. Cultural barriers are particularly important when considering achieve gap factors focused on parental/family attributes and school quality.

Factor 4: *Poverty*. Poorer communities include many residents who lack the money and resources necessary to pass on and enforce normative expectations and behavior. Maydun (2011) states that because of limited money and resources, it would be difficult for community members to participate in the organizations necessary to establish positive social ties and generate resources necessary to address academic concerns. The percent of people living in poverty in the United States by race/ethnicity from 2000-2013 is found in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Percent of People Living in Poverty By Race/ Ethnicity, 2000-2013
According to Figure 8, Black people were consistently at the highest percent of poverty every year from 2000-2013, with Latinos being just underneath them. Minorities are consistently in higher rates of poverty placing institutional limits on them throughout their life span. Their higher rates of poverty greatly affect their academic achievement in schools. This figure demonstrates a response to my research question, of why has there been decreased academic achievement for African-American high school males since the Brown v. Board Supreme Court ruling. Poverty is definitely a key component to this problem.

As mentioned before, this research focuses focus on the educational attainment for African-American males because ever since the movement of the feminization of education, the educational attainment and success for males is steadily declining.

In a 2006 Census bureau report, it showed that at institutions of higher education the gender gap is widening with 56% of their populations being females and 44% being
males. Women are also starting to advance in fields originally dominated by males such as mathematics and sciences (Mulvey, 2009). Closson (2000) found that as high school seniors, girls have higher educational goals than boys, are more likely to enroll in college, and once there, are more likely to complete a bachelor’s degree in five years. He also noted that one popular viewpoint among feminists contends that boys are suffering from masculinity myths which, when enforced, work to squeeze them into a gender straightjacket. According to this theory, outmoded notions about masculinity cause parents to push boys away from their mothers too soon, resulting in a lifelong sense of anxiety and permanent damage to self-esteem. Bennett (2010) found that Only 20.4% of boys score in the top 25% on standardized reading tests, compared to 30.1% of girls. Thirty per cent of boys score in the bottom 25%, while only 19% of girls do so. Bennett (2010) also found that while in class, the mostly female teacher force generally finds today’s adolescent boys unruly, tuned-out, or inclined to skip heavy reading classes.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2014, 37% of females ages 25-29 completed a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 31% of males. For master’s degree or higher, 9% of females have completed degrees compared to just 6% of males. What is causing this shift in educational attainment? Brown v. Board was supposed to desegregate our schools and allow for equality of education for all men, women, children, races, ethnicities, ages, etc., however, our schools are still unequal and African-American males are falling through the cracks.
Since we have seen that school desegregation does not equal equality, we must look at the data to further examine why African-American males have lowered academic achievement since Brown v. Board. The literature provided background into some of the variables attributing to the decline, and looking into the data will provide us a deeper look into the causation of the lower academic achievement. For the purposes of this research we will gather and examine data on the effects of poverty and student motivation, on academic achievement.

Chapter 4 Data and Methods

Instruments

For the purposes of this study, secondary analysis was used to examine the independent variables on the dependent variable. I have completed my Institutional Review Board form and protocol (See Appendix A). Secondary analysis on the dataset, 2009 High School Longitudinal Study, was used to run statistical analyses of the IV’s on the DV. The 2009 High School Longitudinal Study was a national longitudinal study of 23,000+ 9th graders from 944 U.S. schools in 2009. The students were followed throughout secondary and postsecondary years. The study includes student surveys, parent surveys, math and science teacher surveys, school administrator surveys, and school counselor surveys. The study focused on student trajectories from the beginning of high school into postsecondary education, the workforce and beyond.
The study is comprised of a few data collection waves. The first wave (base year) was in 2009, the first follow up to the study was conducted in 2012, in 2013 there was an update, and a second follow up is scheduled for 2016. The project facilitators noted complications with the survey because of low response rates from both parents and teachers. This made necessary special student weights to be used in the statistical analysis to adjust the data skewed by missing cases. The 2009 High School Longitudinal study of 2009 (HSLS: 2009/13, including HS transcripts) can be found under the EDAT site within the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website. For the purposes of this study only the student level files were used.

Research on the effectiveness of poverty level and student motivation on the academic achievement of African-Americans since Brown v. Board is imperative because, since the Obama Administration’s educational reform policies are beginning to push for more funding and changes in educational practices at public schools in order to increase educational success for all students, it is important to first examine the underlying factors surrounding the institutional and social issues preventing educational equity for African-American males. For the purposes of this study, we will run analysis on poverty level and student motivation on the outcome of academic achievement. In the literature review there were other variables that were examined, but the data were not available for this study. The assumption is that due to segregated schools, poverty, and low student motivation, African-American males are in a state of emergency in regards to their academic achievement in comparison to their white male peers. All of these
variables are attributing to a steadily decline in academic achievement for African-American males in low-income urban public high schools.

Measures

Independent Variables

The independent variables for this study are designed to indicate causation of lowered academic achievement among African-American males. Poverty rates, which is an ordinal level variable, are defined as, the set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. If a family’s total income is less than the family’s threshold, then the family and every individual in it is considered in poverty (Census.gov). For the purpose of this study, poverty will be measured according to the students’ family’s annual income, and their location relative to the poverty line. Poverty rates were coded as such: X1FAMINCOME: Total family income from all sources 2008, 0=$35,000-$55,000, 1=$55,000-$75,000, 2=$75,000-$95,000, 3=$95,000-$115,000, and 4=$115,000-$135,000. The second independent variable for this study is student motivation, which is an ordinal level variable. Student motivation/support conceptually for this study refers to the motivation of the student to finish high school, receive good test scores, grades, and their parents’ involvement in the process. Student motivation will be measured based on student interest and attitudes towards high school and college. Motivation was coded at the student level. The student level data was coded as such: S2SATNUM: The Number of times teenager has taken the SAT or ACT, 0=Never, 1=Once, 2=Twice, 3= 3 or more times, and 4= Don’t know what this is; S2SUREDIPL:
How sure teenager is that he/she will receive high school diploma, 1= very sure you will, 2=you probably will, 3= you probably won’t, and 4= very sure you won’t; S2ANYAP: Student has taken advanced placement (AP) course(s), 1=yes, 2=no, 3= don’t know what an AP course is; and S2CLGFT2013: Plans to enroll in college/school full-time or part-time in 2013, 1=full-time, 2=part-time, and 3= don’t know. Due to the sizeable dataset, there were many complications in choosing the independent variables for this study. The initial variables proved problematic for running proper statistical test and analyses. There were large numbers of missing cases within the data that would have caused for a great deal of skewed data and inconclusive results. The variables that have been chosen were selected due to the fact that they adhere to the hypotheses and were complete enough to use for statistical tests in order to draw conclusions on the effects of poverty and low student motivation on academic achievement for African American high school males in urban public schools.

**Dependent Variables**

The dependent variable, academic achievement, which is an ordinal level variable, conceptually means the outcome of education, i.e. the extent to which a student teacher, or institution has achieved their goals. For the purposes of this study academic achievement was measured according to whether or not the student qualified for financial aid based on academic achievement. Student’s qualification based on financial aid was
coded as such: S2QUALACHIEVE: will qualify for financial aid based on academic achievement, 1= yes, 2=No, and 3= don’t know. The dependent variable was changed around from the initial variable due to lack of problem with the data. There were too many cases of missing data to allow accurate statistical testing. The variable chosen does not speak directly to academic achievement but it shows that through a student’s academic achievement they were eligible for financial aid for college after graduation, showing that they must have achieved some level of academic excellence during high school.

**Control Variables**

There were two control variables that had to be coded into SPSS for the statistical analysis portion of this study. These variables are Race, which was coded as X1RACE 1=Black/African-American/Non-Hispanic and 2= White, Non-Hispanic. Gender was coded as X1SEX: 1=Male 0=Female.

**Analysis/Results**

For the purposes of this study, a number of tests were used to measure poverty and motivation on the academic achievement of African-American males using secondary data analysis on a National High School Longitudinal study from 2009.

It is important to examine these relationships, in order to get to the fundamental differences between African-American and White students in public high Schools in order make effective policy changes to close the academic achievement gap.
Univariate Analysis

Table 4.0 provides a description of the sample that was used for the purposes of this study. Among the sample of 23,000 people who were surveyed from 944 schools for the High School longitudinal study 2009-2013, there were majority male respondents (51%) of whom were also majority White, Non-Hispanic students (83.1%). Most of the schools that were surveyed were located in the suburbs (36.03%) and in the cities (28.46%). The median family income among the respondents fell between $35,000 and $55,000, which can be classified among low to middle socioeconomic status. Student motivation was assessed across a number of different variables.

When it came to how sure the teenager is that he/she will receive a high school diploma, the majority (88.4%) was very sure that they would receive their high school diploma at the completion of their senior year. This is a an encouraging statistic, especially given that only a low minority of (0.8%) were very sure that they wouldn’t receive their high school diploma. When it came to the number of times a teenager has taken the SAT or the ACT, the majority of students (53.3%) had never taken either test. This is an alarming statistic because given the size of the sample you would think that more people would have taken the test, in order to apply to most colleges and universities. This shows low motivation in these schools or a lack of resources in the schools to provide information about these tests.
Table 4.0
Description of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N=23,000</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ African-American/ Non-Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$&lt;15,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-$35,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000-$55,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55,000-$75,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000-$95,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$95,000-$115,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$115,000-$135,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Expectation: How sure teenager is that he/she will receive high school diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Sure you will</td>
<td></td>
<td>88.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You probably will</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You probably won’t</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very sure you won’t</td>
<td></td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of times teenager has taken the SAT or ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more times</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know what this is</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has taken advanced placement (AP) course(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know what an AP course is</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans to enroll in college/school full-time or part-time in 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td></td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student will qualify for financial aid based on academic achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adding to that, (59.1%) of the respondents also admitted to never taking an AP course. This could be due to either lack of AP courses or faculty equipped to teach the AP courses or it could be due to inadequate counseling by the schools counselors and administration. Most (64.5%) of the respondents plan to enroll in college full-time in the fall of 2013, this is surprising given the low percentages of these students who have not taken the SAT or ACT or any AP courses. Of those 64.5% who plan to enroll in college, most (54.9%) will qualify for financial aid, which is good, but when looking at the fact that 27.3% of them do not know whether or not they qualify for financial aid, it begs the question of why they do not know whether or not they qualify (Table 4.1).

For the purposes of this study cross tabulations were run between the individual independent variables (poverty and motivation) and the dependent academic achievement. The variables and their measures can be found in Table 4.2.
## Bivariate Analysis

### Table 4.1
Students Qualifying for financial aid based on academic achievement
Gender, Race, Poverty, and Motivation Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N=23,000</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>p-values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ African-American/ Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>28.46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>36.03%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>23.65%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Family Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$15,000</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$15,000, &lt;$35,000</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; $35,000, &lt;$55,000</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>6.8%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Expectation:</strong> How sure teenager is that he/she will receive high school diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Sure you will</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You probably will</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You probably won’t</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very sure you won’t</td>
<td>.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of times teenager has taken the SAT or ACT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more times</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know what this is</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has taken advanced placement (AP) course(s)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know what an AP course is</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plans to enroll in college/school full-time or part-time in 2013</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the purposes of this study cross tabulations were run between the individual independent variables (poverty and motivation) and the dependent academic achievement. The variables and their measures can be found in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2  Variable Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Poverty                  | Median Family Income less than $15,000  
Median Family Income greater than $15,001 |
| Motivation               | Number of times student has taken SAT or ACT  
Whether or not student has taken an AP course (Yes or No)  
Believes will receive high school diploma (Yes, No)  
Will enroll in college (Yes or No) |
| **Dependent Variable**   |           |
| Academic Achievement     | Student qualifies for financial aid based on academic achievement (Yes or No) |
| **Control Variables**    |           |
| Race                     | Black/ African-American  
White |
| Gender                   | Male  
Female |
Bivariate analysis was run on poverty and motivation predictors on academic achievement. According to the results, females black and white are more likely to have higher levels of academic achievement, with over 60% of females saying that they will qualify for financial aid based on academic achievement as opposed to 50% for males. Females also reported higher percentages when it came to whether or not they would

| Table 4.3 | Bivariate Analysis Qualify for Financial Aid Based on Academic Achievement |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Academic Achievement %yes | Black Male | White Male | Black Female | White Female | Chi-square | p |
| 2. Expects graduate high school %yes | 97.8 | 97.6 | 98.4 | 98.7 | 20.44 | 0.000 |
| 3. Took SAT %yes | 42.7 | 44.7 | 45.8 | 47.9 | 16.22 | 0.000 |
| 4. Enroll in College %yes | 82.5 | 82.2 | 85.3 | 87.2 | 47.22 | 0.000 |
| 5. Took AP Classes %yes | 22.6 | 33.1 | 28.4 | 39.7 | 151.04 | 0.000 |
| 6. Below Poverty Level %yes | 28.8 | 9.3 | 27.6 | 9.9 | 445.09 | 0.000 |

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001
graduate from high school than males. Surprisingly, black males reported slightly higher percentages than white males in whether or not they would graduate from high school.

Females were more likely to take the SAT or ACT, black males were the least likely at 42.7%. Females were more likely to enroll in college, white females being the most likely at 87.2%. Across the board all groups reported low percentages on whether or not they took any AP courses, but white females were most likely (39.7%) and black males were least likely (22.6%). In regards to poverty rates on academic achievement, white males and females were least likely to be in poverty and black males were slightly more likely than black females at (28.8%). Every result yielded a p value of .000, which is statistically significant, showing that there is a correlation between the independent variables and academic achievement.

**Multivariate Analysis**

For the purposes of this study multiple regression was run in order to determine the variance between the variables and to determine which variables were the best predictors of poverty and motivation on academic achievement. In order to run the variables in regression our original variables had to be recoded in order to dichotomize them to produce a model with the best fit. X1POVERTY was transformed into Binary_Poverty making 0=Below the poverty threshold and 1= At or above the poverty threshold. S2SATNUM:Number of times teenager has taken the SAT or ACT was transformed variable into Binary_SATNUM. Collapsed the “Never” and “Don’t know”
categories in 0=No, and made 1=once or more categories into 1=yes. S2SUREDIPL: How sure teenager is that he/she will receive high school diploma was transformed variable into Binary_GraduateHS. Collapsed “you probably won’t” and “Very sure you won’t” into 0=No and collapsed “Very sure you will” and “You probably will” into 1=Yes. S2ANYAP: Has taken advanced placement (AP) course(s) was transformed variable into Binary_AnyAp, changing the recoded labels of 1=yes and 2=No into 0=No and 1=Yes. S2CLGFT2013: Plans to enroll in college/school full-time or part-time in 2013 was recoded into Binary__CollegeEnrollment which collapsed “Full-time” and “Part-time” into 1=Yes and made “Don’t know” into 0=No. S2QUALACHIEVE: Will qualify for financial aid based on academic achievement was transformed into Academic Achievement by changing the recoded labels of 1=Yes and 2=No to 0=No and 1=Yes. X1RACE: Student’s race/ethnicity was transformed variable into Binary_Race by changing 1=Black/African-American and 2=White to, 1=Black and 0=White. Lastly, X1SEX: Student’s Sex was transformed variable into Binary_Sex by changing 1=Male and 2=Female into, 0=Female and 1=Male. Bivariate correlations were run on the independent variables with the dependent variable. The correlation matrix can be found in Table 4.4.

As shown in Table 4.4 the majority of my predictions were supported. As expected, whether or not the student took any advanced placement (AP) course(s) was positively correlated with the academic achievement of the student. This relationship
yielded the highest correlation coefficient of .269. College enrollment was also positively correlated with a coefficient of .156.

Table 4.4 Correlation Matrix for key variables for poverty and motivation on academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SATNUM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. AnyAP</td>
<td>.167**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. GraduateHS</td>
<td>.050**</td>
<td>.074**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. CollegeEnrollment</td>
<td>.094**</td>
<td>.105**</td>
<td>.033**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Race</td>
<td>- .016</td>
<td>- .086**</td>
<td>- .003</td>
<td>- .010</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>6. Sex</td>
<td>- .028**</td>
<td>- .070**</td>
<td>- .038**</td>
<td>- .060**</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>7. Below Poverty Line</td>
<td>- .079**</td>
<td>- .128**</td>
<td>- .079**</td>
<td>- .073**</td>
<td>.199**</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>8. Academic Achievement</td>
<td>.154**</td>
<td>.269**</td>
<td>.110**</td>
<td>.156**</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>- .114**</td>
<td>- .87**</td>
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</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

The tests also produced positive correlation coefficients for whether or not the student has taken the SAT or ACT (.154) and whether or not they graduated from high school (.110) with academic achievement. The sex of the student and the student’s poverty level were negatively correlated with academic achievement and, both of the variables are significant. Sex having a negative correlation shows us that academic achievement is more geared towards females. Surprisingly, for race, no significant relationship was found between the race of a student and their academic achievement, yielding a correlation coefficient of .002. Table 4.5 shows us the summary of multiple regression analyses for predicting poverty and motivation on academic achievement.
Table 4.5

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses for predicting poverty and motivation on academic achievement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
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<td>Binary_AnyAP</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<td>Binary_CollegeEnrollment</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Binary_Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Binary_GraduateHS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rsquared</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

*p < .05. **p < .01. *** p<.001

For the purposes of this study, a multilinear regression was run in order to predict academic achievement based on whether or not a student has taken any AP courses, their college enrollment status, whether or not they took the SAT or ACT, their sex, whether not they will graduate from high school, their poverty level, and their race. The overall regression model only recognized five predictors: whether or not a student has taken any AP courses, their college enrollment status, whether or not they took the SAT or ACT, their sex, whether not they will graduate from high school, that significantly predict academic achievement, R-square=.093, r-square adjusted= .092, F(5, 8602)=175.91, p < .000. This model accounted for 9.3% of variance in academic achievement.
Chapter 5 Findings/Discussion

The data results in this study were very interesting. The results supported both hypotheses. My first hypothesis, H1: African-American males in poor families will have lower academic achievement than White males was supported through correlations and multiple regression of poverty on academic achievement. The results yielded a p value of .000, which is statistically significant, showing that there is a correlation between poverty and academic achievement. This is expected given that according to the literature, African American students are highly concentrated in racially homogenous schools and hyper-segregated neighborhoods, where academic achievement is low. Students who live in impoverished areas are less likely to be fully engaged in school as some of their more economically stable peers because their parents may not have had the best educational experience because of their circumstances, so the values on education would not be as strong in their household, causing a cycle of school disengagement. Poverty having a significant correlation with academic achievement also supports the theory of social disorganization, because as discussed in the theory chapter neighborhoods with schools where there is a high level of social disorganization have lowered academic achievement.

A characteristic of social disorganization is poverty. Poverty stricken areas have schools with limited resources, inadequate teachers, and blighted facilities, which leads to lowered academic achievement. Areas where there is high social disorganization also experience higher rates of crime, which lead to lowered academic achievement. Students in low-income schools have higher behavioral issues and have higher rates of African
American males being diagnosed with special needs, which have a great impact on their academic achievement in high school and their future educational attainment.

Ashenfelter, Collins, and Yoon (2005) discovered through their research that while school resource disparities attribute to lower educational attainment for African-American students, it is the family’s economic resources that cause the greatest disadvantages. Poverty, however, was not among the highest predictors of academic achievement, which means that poverty is not as strong as a predictor of a student’s academic achievement as it was originally thought. In earlier discussions it was noted that integration alone does not improve the academic achievement of the students within the schools. The data results showed that neighborhood and school poverty alone does not affect academic achievement. Students being in better schools or school districts, does not always equate to students receiving a quality education. Schools in poorer school districts can populate students with high levels of academic achievement, which goes against the original notion that poverty is equal to low academic achievement.

My second hypothesis, H2: African-American males are less motivated than white males causing lowered academic achievement was also supported through the data. Motivation was statistically significant when compared to academic achievement. This result was expected based on earlier discussions within the literature, which found that, within low-income neighborhoods, educational attitudes are more unenthusiastic as opposed to middle and upper income neighborhoods. Stephan (1978) found through social scientist testimony during the Brown v. Board of Education trials that the self-
esteem of blacks is low in segregated schools, and segregation leads black children to be prejudiced toward whites.

Self-esteem and prejudice affected the school achievement of minority students. Residents within these neighborhoods have lower levels of educational attainment, so there is a lack of educationally motivated students residing in these communities (Holzman, 2010). Motivation being significant also lends to the social disorganization theory, because students in low income areas where social disorganization is high have lowered motivation for school, because of the environmental effects of their neighborhoods. Students may live in areas with limited resources and an overall lack of educational attainment between members of the community. According to previously discussed literature, Hudley (2013), Jonhson et al. (2004), and Pellerin (2005), students in low income neighborhoods, often have parents with low educational attainment and therefore, lack the support that they need in order to have high academic achievement in schools.

Motivation on the whole was also not among the highest predictors of academic achievement based on the regression model. Variables within motivation, whether or not a student will graduate from high school and whether or not they took any AP courses were the highest predictors of academic achievement that leads to academic achievement being based on opportunity, more than income or motivation. The literature supports this notion because, within social disorganization theory and the literature, schools within low-income neighborhoods have limited resources (Rothstein, 2013). They have outdated
textbooks, ill equipped teachers, blighted facilities, and low technological equipment for students. All of these affect whether or not the school has the resources for AP courses or teachers that are qualified to teach the students in AP courses, so if they are not made available, then students may have lowered academic achievement and lowered educational attainment after high school. Whether or not a student graduates from high school also plays a part because that determines if they will be able to go on to college or if they will be able to have complete high school. Bivariate correlations yielded a correlation of .002 for race on academic achievement, which was not statistically significant, showing that race is not correlated to academic achievement. This tells us that the academic achievement of the student is not based on their race, but rather, according to the data based on the opportunities that the student is provided in order to do well in school.

The bivariate correlations also gave a correlation of -.114 for sex, which means that the data was geared more towards females than males this result was statistically significant. This tells us that females have higher academic achievement then males, which was already shown through the literature (Mulvey, 2009). In these two cases, a student’s sex is more of a predictor of academic achievement, then their race. Analysis was conducted controlling for race and sex and no definitive or remarkable differences were found. This leads to showing that race and sex are not extremely strong predictors of academic achievement. It is more of a structural issue within the school district and school facility.
Chapter 6 Policy Implications/Conclusion

It is imperative that we examine the effects of school desegregation and low-income urban public school structure on the academic achievement of African-American males. Following the theoretical framework of the feminization of education it is important to focus on African-American males, because males are falling behind in educational success and attainment at alarming rates. They are performing worse on standardized tests, exhibiting lower levels of reading and mathematics skills, and have more behavioral problems than ever before in low-income urban public high schools, while females are achieving higher levels of academic achievement than ever before. The literature further explained the cause of these growing disparities and future policy implications to close the achievement gap between African-American and White students.

It is my hope that the research and data from this study can assist policy makers for educational reform with future policies and funding for improving the educational attainment for African-American males. Such policies could include; more extensive teacher training and cultural competence training for teachers and administrators alike, more funding or resources in schools in urban neighborhoods with low resources, where a disproportionate number of African-American males attend schools.

Also suggested is behavioral and cognitive behavioral training for school teachers and administrators to better equip them to deal with the behavior of males and to understand their cognitive development to improve teaching practices and curriculum. As
seen through the data, there is a need to create more opportunities for students in schools that may lack resources such as AP courses, SAT and ACT prep courses and information, adequate teachers and counselors, and technological efficacy courses, that could increase the academic achievement of these students. Providing more opportunities for students to take college courses and career training courses while they are in high school in order to increase their academic achievement and set the students up to be able to succeed post-graduation would also be integral in creating higher academic achievement.

This study focuses on a macro level analysis of the data across time, which can allow for more broad data and implications. Future research should focus on more contemporary issues like the use of project-based classroom instruction for males because their hyperactive nature causes them to lose focus quickly on assignments and tasks in the classroom. Also suggested are separate gender classrooms to cater to male and female differences in learning (Stoll, 2013). We have to consider the data in order to allocate funding, provide more extensive teacher training, and greater resources in order to bring our boys back up to speed in educational attainment and success.
Appendices

Appendix A. IRB Form/Approval Sheet
Appendix B. CITI Certificate
Appendix C. Dataset Codebook
(HSLS:2009/13, including HS transcripts)

References


Bennett, P. W. (2010,). The "boy problem" in schools: Has feminization gone too far?


Green v. County board of education of New Kent County (391 U.S 430 [1968])


Mulvey, J. D. (2009). Feminization of schools: If young boys are left behind, what targeted teaching strategies can lead them to reach their potential. *The School Administrator, 66*(8)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Recoded</th>
<th>Recoded for Regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1FAMINCOME: Total family income from all sources 2008</td>
<td>0=$35,000-$55,000 1=$55,000-$75,000 2=$75,000-$95,000 3=$95,000-$115,000 4=$115,000-$135,000 5=$135,000-$155,000 6=$155,000-$175,000 7=$175,000-$195,000 8=$195,000-$215,000 9=$215,000-$235,000 10= &lt; $235,000</td>
<td>0=Less than $15,000 1=$15,000 or higher</td>
<td>Changed variable to Binary_Poverty making 0=Below the poverty threshold and 1= At or above the poverty threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2SATNUM: Number of times teenager has taken the SAT or ACT</td>
<td>0=Never 1= Once 2= Twice 3= 3 or more times 4=Don't know what this is</td>
<td>0=Never 1= Once or more 2=Don't Know</td>
<td>Transformed variable into Binary_SATNUM. Collapsed the &quot;Never&quot; and &quot;Don't know&quot; categories in 0=No, and made 1=once or more categories into 1=yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2SUREDIPL: How sure teenager is that he/she will receive high school diploma</td>
<td>1=Very sure you will 2= You probably will 3= You probably won't 4= Very Sure you wont</td>
<td>1=Yes 2= No</td>
<td>Transformed variable into Binary_GraduateHS. Collapsed &quot;you probably won't&quot; and &quot;Very sure you will&quot; into 0=No and collapsed &quot;Very sure you will&quot; and &quot;You probably will&quot; into 1=Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2ANYAP: Has taken advanced placement (AP) course(s)</td>
<td>1=Yes 2=No 3=Don't know what an AP course is</td>
<td>1=Yes 2= No</td>
<td>Transformed variable into Binary_AnyAp. Changed the recoded labels of 1=yes and 2=No into 0=No and 1=Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2CLGFT2013: Plans to enroll in college/school full-time or part-time in 2013</td>
<td>1=Full-Time 2=Part-Time 3=Don't Know</td>
<td>1=Yes 2= No</td>
<td>Recoded into Binary_CollegeEnrollment. Collapsed &quot;Full-time&quot; and &quot;Part-time&quot; into 1=Yes and made &quot;Don't know&quot; into 0=No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dependent Variable)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>S2QUALACHIEVE: Will qualify for financial aid based on academic achievement</td>
<td>1=Yes 2=No 3= Don’t Know</td>
<td>1=Yes 2= No</td>
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<td>X1RACE: Student's race/ethnicity</td>
<td>1=Black/African-American 2=White, Non-Hispanic 3= Other 4= Multi-Racial</td>
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<tr>
<td>X1SEX: Student's Sex</td>
<td>1=Male 2=Female</td>
<td>1= Male 2= Female</td>
<td>Transformed variable into Binary_Sex. Changed 1=Male and 2=Female into, 0=Female and 1=Male</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If your research is being conducted at a facility other than Wright State University, you must have approval from that facility in order to proceed.

This action will be reported to the Full Board at their next scheduled meeting.

Appendix C HLSLS:09 Codebook

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 775-3974.

Best wishes for a successful study.