

# Tinto's Academic/Social Integration Factors and Black Male Persistence in Florida Colleges

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## Abstract

Despite community colleges' overarching mandate and mission—to serve as an entry point to higher education for first-generation, low-income, underrepresented and minority students, as well as those needing to retrain—Black male students habitually lag in persistence to graduation compared to their non-Black male peers in the Florida College System (FCS; Community College Research Center, 2021; Complete College America, 2016; Florida College System Developmental Education Accountability Reports, 2020). The factors that influence Black male persistence are investigated by employing the Institutional Integration Scale (IIS; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, 1983) along with the Cross Ethnic Racial Identity Scale – Adult (CERIS-A)—that examines the ethnic and racial identity aspects of Black male participants' socialization experiences.

## Purpose

A strength-based study that explores the relationship among academic, social and persistence factors as a function of their ethnic-racial identity.

## Research Question

What is the relationship among academic and social integration of collegiate African American and Caribbean Black male students and their intention to persist to graduation?

## Hypotheses

- H<sub>a1</sub>: There will be a modest positive relationship between Peer-group interactions and Persistence..
- H<sub>a2</sub>: There will be a positive relationship between Interactions with Faculty and Persistence.
- H<sub>a3</sub>: There will be a positive relationship between Faculty Concern for Student Development and Persistence.

## References

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## Literature Review

In the sociology of education, Interactionist theorists investigate the interpersonal dynamics of students and their socially constructed lives. One natural phenomenon examined in context is the way in which students use *symbols* to make sense of their social environment. In addition, labeling theory addresses the ways in which labels play a significant role in determining how students formulate their sense of self-worth (Ballantine et al., 2017).

Interactionist theory applied to Black males has identified a number of behaviors as pathologies that serve to undermine educational achievements such as:

- Cool posing, described as ritualized performances composed of scripts, physical posturing, and expressions meant to convey pride, strength, and control (Harris et al., 2011; Hatchett, 1993);
- Self-fulfilling prophecy, described as a nearly inevitable state of mind when a student is repeatedly told or reminded of an inferior status (Wineburg, 1987); and
- Male Gender Role Conflict (MGRC) and toxic masculinity, described as entry points of harmful effects to men who are unable to meet traditional hegemonic expectations (Harris et, 2011; Neal, 2011).

Collectively, when these behaviors and conditions are applied to Black male students, they are often done so using a unidimensional and universal definition of success (Davis & Hunter, 1994). The original intent of symbolic interactionism was to place priority on the meanings that human beings assign to things, *not* behaviors. Consequently, ignoring assigned meanings to focus on a resulting behavior negates the significance of meaning and falsifies the behavior in question (Blumer, 1969/1998).

This strength-based study will explore the relationship among academic, social, and persistence factors as a function of Black male ethnic-racial identity.

## Method

Participants:

- All degree seeking Black male students attending any of the 28 colleges in the Florida College System (FCS).

Measurements:

- Self-reporting via survey to allow students to identify freely.
- Institutional Integration Scale (IIS).
- Cross ethnic Racial Identity Scale-Adult (CERIS-A).

## Data Analysis

Criterion Variable: Self-report intention to persist to graduation

Multiple Regression #1 Predictors:

- Peer-Group Interactions
- Interactions with Faculty
- Faculty Concern for Student Development
- Academic and Intellectual Development
- Institutional and Goal Commitment
- Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive
- Ethnicity

Multiple Regression #2 Predictors:

- Assimilation
- Miseducation
- Anti-Dominant
- Ethnocentricity
- Multiculturalist Inclusive
- Ethnic-Racial Salience
- Ethnicity

## Implications

A better understanding of the cognitive and non-cognitive factors that impact the success of Black male students can inform policy and the development of programs to support this at-risk population. Leveraging new insights from an interactionist perspective has the potential to improve Black male retention campaigns and college completion rates.

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