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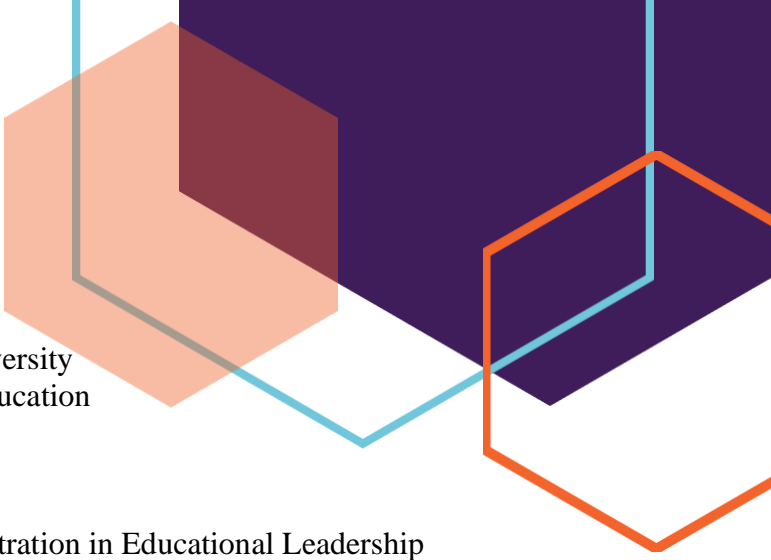Follow this and additional works at: https://via.library.depaul.edu/soe_etd

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A Capstone in Education with a Concentration in Educational Leadership

The Impact of Racial Identity in College Planning Resources for African American Students Considering Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)

by

Camille Franklin

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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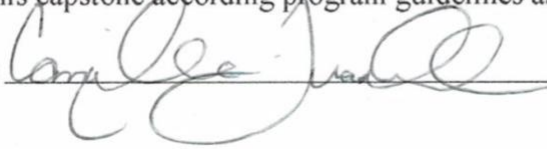
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Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this capstone. Any assistance received in the preparation of this capstone has been acknowledged and disclosed within it. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased, have been cited. I certify that I have prepared this capstone according program guidelines as directed.

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Executive Summary

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have always impacted the education of African Americans. Their mission was always grounded in educating Black Americans during a time when laws and segregation prevented that from happening. HBCUs have a historic responsibility as the primary providers of post-secondary education for African Americans in a social environment of racial discrimination (Johnson, 2019). By the turn of the century, there was a shift in blacks being educated solely by HBCU's. In 1950 most, black students attended an HBCU but by 1975 it was only 25%, and in 2015 only 9% of black students were enrolled in an HBCU (Johnson, 2019). Black students now have choices when deciding on which college or university to attend and are no longer limited to just HBCU's.

Despite the enrollment trends, HBCUs are still surviving and students are still choosing to enroll. There are many factors that contribute to the decision to attend an HBCU, such as reputation of school, scholarship opportunities, and alumni engagement. Racial identity is an influential factor that impacts a student's decision to attend an HBCU. Spurgeon and Myers use W.E Cross's definition of racial identity as an "individual's personal characteristics shared across gender, race, ethnicity and culture and the cultural norms that connect groups of people" (2008). Racial identity is developed though socialization which is exemplified using media images. This form of socialization impacts a student's self-image thus contributing to the factors and reasoning they choose to attend an HBCU.

This Capstone project will review samples of resources and guides to influence and help shape African American students' choice in attending college. A checklist has been developed that will be used to review the documents developed for students when choosing their college. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made along with some guidelines and suggestions for effective practices when considering racial identity as a determinant focus. This project will result in a tangible product that can be used for African American students who are discovering their racial identity while deciding on an HBCU to attend.

*Keywords: racial identity, college choice, Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Background

Introduction

Choosing a college or university is one of the most important decisions a student will ever make. This decision ultimately affects the rest of their lives and is a decision made with high regard. McDonough (1997) explains that when choosing a college, students consider a school that is most familiar to them and the opportunities that are available, thus by going through particular phases; being able to narrow down their initial school choices to a few options.

Although there is research regarding the experiences African American students encounter from various types of higher educational settings, there is limited research about the influences that account for black students who choose to attend HBCU (Matabane and Merritt, 2014). High school racial experiences also influence the decision to attend an HBCU. Black students' high school experiences around race were critical to their decision to attend an HBCU along with attitudes about themselves, religion, race (racial identity) and academic achievement (Matabane & Merritt, 2014; Van Camp, Barden and Sloan, 2010). A study by Freeman (1999) concluded that African American students who attended predominantly white high schools were more likely to consider attending an HBCU, than students at predominantly black high schools (Johnson, 2019). On the contrary, Van Camp, Barden and Sloan (2010), suggest that black students whose racial identity is more central to who they are may be more likely to make key life decisions, such as choosing a college or university based on race-related reasons. Martin describes the process of adolescent identity being fraught with elements of distress and continuous discovery. She further indicates that adolescents have the task of trying on new roles, coming to terms with their sexuality, separation and individuation from their family, establishment of autonomy and understanding their place in society and the world (Martin, 2008). In addition, for African American youth, they must include the challenge of figuring out what being black means within their life. In other words, this is a time of defining and creating their racial identity. Creating one's racial identity can be a challenge when media continuously displays numerous negative images. For African Americans, it can be a struggle to define your racial identity when stereotypes become the media norm thus heavily influencing how you see yourself within society (Martin, 2008; Davis and Gandy, Jr., 1999; Townsend, Neilands, Thomas and Jackson, 2010).

 According to the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights website (Jan, 2020), HBCUs were established to serve the educational needs of Black Americans. Before their establishment and years after, blacks were denied admission to traditionally white institutions. African Americans were limited in their access to types of higher education institutions partly because most African American college-aged students still resided in heavily segregated southern states, where educational barriers made it impossible to attend predominantly white institutions (PWI) and partly because at northern PWI's blacks also had limited access (Freeman and Thomas, 2002). Due to these heavily segregated institutions, HBCUs became the principle means for providing higher education to black Americans before and years after the Civil War (US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2020). With the introduction of the G.I. Bill of rights, which allowed and increased the number of black veterans able to attend college and the Civil Rights Act that also gave blacks access to select PWIs, more blacks were choosing

to attend a PWI. By the 1980's only 20% of black students in higher education attended an HBCU (Freeman and Thomas, 2002).

Problem Statement

When choosing to attend higher education students have access to an overwhelmingly amount of information and resources that will aid in their decision. However, many resources available to college decision making do not focus on or include the factor of racial identity. Because African American students have more choices now than ever in their higher education selection, it is imperative that we discuss how racial identity development impacts their decision to attend an HBCU.

Purpose of the Study

Using a qualitative document analysis methodology, this study will aim to identify and analyze resources used for African American students when making the decision to attend college. By examining the resources available I am able to determine the amount of information given that incorporates racial identity into the decision-making process. Utilizing this analysis, will allow me the opportunity of creating a document that will serve as a resource guide for African American students with a focus on racial identity. This resource guide will be aimed at high school students who are interested in attending college and how they can use their racial identity as a factor in college choice. This work is important because it provides insight into the development of African American students' racial identity and how that impacts their college choice.

Research Questions

In support of providing African American students with a resource guide/workbook that will assist them in deciding an HBCU to attend while considering their racial identity as a determinant factor, I consider the following the following research questions:

RQ1. What role have media images contributed to racial identity and college choice?
RQ2. What resources are available to influence college choice for African American students and how are they utilized?

By examining these research questions, I will highlight a gap that exists in that a culturally competent resource guide is not available to help African American students decide on how to choose a college. College choice is a decision that is made collectively with varying factors; a resource guide that will cater to a student's racial identity will enrich that students' college experience.

Research Design Overview

This study will be using the qualitative methodology of document analysis. Qualitative document analysis (document review) will be used to acquire and analyze data. The data for this study will be refined to the observation of college planning resources or workbooks for students that will be entering college. Document review requires the researcher to enter into an in-depth learning process that will make them critical editors of the texts they are reviewing (Letts, Wilkins, Law, Stewart, Bosch & Westmorland, 2007). A document is defined by Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese and Schneider as "any symbolic representation that can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis. A qualitative approach focuses on describing and tracking discourse, including words, meanings, and themes over time. Qualitative document analysis

relies on immersion in the subject matter, conceptually informed conversations with numerous documents and examples, and theoretical sampling for systematic and constant comparison" (Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese & Schneider, 2008). The main emphasis in qualitative document analysis is on the document's discovery and descriptions which include the search for underlying meanings, patterns and processes, rather than mere quantity or numerical relationships between variables (Altheide, 2000).

Altheide (2000) outlines the basic steps involved in qualitative data analysis. The first step is determining a specific problem to be investigated. The researcher needs to become familiar with the process and context of the information source by exploring possible sources, in some cases, documents. With several sources gathered the researcher will next make themselves familiar with several examples of relevant documents, noting particularly the format. The next will be to select a unit of analysis for each article collected which could change as the research continues. After establishing a unit of analysis, the researcher will list several items or categories to guide data collection and draft a protocol. The next step is to test the protocol by collecting data from several documents. The researcher will then revise that protocol and select several additional cases to further refine it (Altheide, 2000).

Qualitative document analysis also involves identifying relevant terms and topics while comparing various data elements in addition to theoretical sampling of electronic documents, developing a protocol for systematic analysis with continual evaluations to determine themes, frames and discourse(Altheide, 2000; Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese & Schneider,2008).

For the purpose of this study, a document review is the appropriate methodology to use. This study focuses on the impact of documents when college planning with an end result to create a guide that can be used for students considering college enrollment. By studying various documents and comparing them I am able to be more critical of their perspective and better create a guide that incorporates the missing pieces found within the data collected.

Definition of Key Terminology

Terms	Definitions
College Choice Model	**Tool used to aid in decision making for higher education.**
HBCU	**A historically black college or university with a predominantly African American student population.**
Racial Identity	**One's identity as defined or characterized by their race and how that identification helps shapes their idea of self.**

Afrocentrism	A study that focuses on the history and pride of people from Africa.
PWI	A predominantly white institution (or college/university) at which more than half of the student population is white.
Media	Refers to television and film images only between the eras of 1960-current time.

Note: Throughout this paper I will be using the term African American and Black American interchangeably to represent people of African American decent.

Literature Review

Introduction

During the latter half of the twentieth century the undergraduate enrollment of black students shifted from HBCU's to PWI's. These colleges usually forbade or discouraged admission of all but white students (Johnson, 2019; Crewe, 2017). HBCU's have seen a rise and fall in attendance since their existence. Although these unsteady enrollment trends are a result of various factors, some of them are structural and systemic challenges. As an example, public HBCU's are not as well funded as their state PWI counterparts. These funding constraints make it difficult to improve campus facilities, expand programs and possibly attract high profile faculty thus resulting in them not being as competitive in a student's college choice (Johnson, 2019). However, as the enrollment trend goes, black students are still choosing HBCU's. The reasons black students choose a specific college can be influenced by a variety of academic, social, and economic factors such as the reputation of the institution and academic department, the social life, tuition rates and financial aid (Van Camp, Barden, and Sloan, 2010; Matabane and Merritt, 2014). With so many options, it is important to understand how students make their college choice decision. Most research regarding college choice almost exclusively comes from samples by white students. The research that exists around African American students has focused on their decision whether to attend college at all, but no research has considered the reasons black students choose to attend a specific type of college (Van Camp, Barden, and Sloan, 2010). As a reason to examine the need to study why African American students choose to attend HBCU's, this literature review explores the factor of racial identity and its development from media images as it impacts the college choice process. This review will provide a historical context on the creation and purpose of HBCU's and will discuss the college choice model using Hossler and Gallagher as a foundational model. It will also examine the media and social/political influence on deciding to attend an HBCU.

College Choice Model

Hossler's and Gallagher's (1987) three stages of college choice model includes: predisposition, search and choice. Understanding the context of the college choice model is imperative to the discussion of how any student decides to attend college. Hossler and Gallagher's college choice model (Fig. 1) provides foundational context on the thought process of college choice.

Figure 1. Hossler and Gallagher College Choice Model

The predisposition phase involves the initial decision to attend college. In the search phase the student begins to identify schools of interest and gather information about them. It is within this stage that students seek and receive help from family, school counselors and peers. During the final stage of choice, students have narrowed down their choices and are able to choose a specific college to attend. McDonough (1997; Woodley and Figiel, 2004) states that "except for social class, race is the most influential factor affecting college entry." Data indicates that students who have plans for post-secondary education by their second year of high school are more likely to actually attend a college (McDonough, 1997). While there are many factors that contribute to student college choice, one strong contributing factor is having attended a high school that is focused on attending college.

Perna's 2006 (Johnson, 2019) conceptual choice model offers another understanding for the college choice process for all students. This model attributes that college choice decisions are shaped by four contextual layers: individual habitus, school and community context, higher education context, and broader social, economic, and policy context. Johnson (2019) refers to habitus as representing a person's view of the world and their place in it, often formed through socialization during childhood and reinforced throughout one's life. Familial background, racial and social identities and social and cultural capital also contribute to one's socialization. The scholars used school and community context for their analysis of the social structures and resources that guide or influence student college choice. The higher education context emphasizes the role of the institution in deciding to attend—their recruitment, programs offered and school reputation. The final step includes that social, economic and policy context shapes a student's college choice factors in this stage. This includes population demographics, characteristics of the labor market, as well as policies and structures that encourage or discourage college enrollment (Johnson, 2019).

While prior research has been based predominantly on samples of white students, when focusing on students of color, some of the key issues span across ethnic groups; but there are some differences that do exist when considering factors of student choice. Black students have been known to take more time when considering options for college and consult varying sources of information within their search phase, as opposed to their white peer counterpart (Van Camp, Barden, Sloan and Clarke, 2009). A 2005 study conducted by Freeman (Van Camp, et. al., 2009) concluded the importance of cultural support in African Americans choice to attend college. According to Van Camp (2009), the experience of students who attend HBCUs

indicates that race related reasons do indeed play a role in college choice (Williams and Palmer, 2016; Johnson, 2019; McDonough, Antonio and Trent, 1997).

Racial Identity Development

When researching deeper into reasons African American students consider HBCU's, Freeman (1999) found that the more African American students were isolated from their cultural heritage, the more they longed for a deeper understanding of it and the more motivated they were to attend an HBCU (Freeman and Thomas, 2002). This idea of racial identity development contributed to the decision made about where to attend college.

Spurgeon and Myers use W.E Cross' definition of racial identity as an individual's personal characteristics shared across gender, race, ethnicity and culture and the cultural norms that connect groups of people (2008). Another definition from Martin, defines Cross's concept of Nigrescence or the process of becoming black, as an internalization of positive attitudes about a person's racial identity which is characterized by the development of comfort, tolerance, and confidence in self-image (Martin, 2014). Cross believed that racial identity development and change occur through socialization.

Socialization continues to identify formation through four linear stages of development: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. Racial identity serves as a paradigm through which individuals can, in a positive manner, confront and address negative life circumstances (Spurgeon and Myers, 2008; Cross and Vandiver, 2001; Martin, 2008). Within the pre-encounter stage, individuals consciously or unconsciously devalue their own sense of blackness while valuing society's norms and ways. There is a strong desire to assimilate to societal ways and norms as a result of one's feeling and self-worth deriving from a white perspective. Negative media images of African American portrayals heavily influence this phase, while also prohibiting individual growth. If the only sense of self is a derivative of negative depictions, it has the opportunity of creating a form of self-hate. Individuals in the encounter stage, experience a serious crisis or event that challenges previous ideologies and behaviors thus shifting and creating reinterpretations of world views. During this stage there is a clear rejection of previous white, social, cultural and institutional standards, which may result in a feeling of being miseducated. These ideologies are reinforced by an increase in positive African American media images in addition to positive real-life influences which contradicts previous negative seen images, causing a deeper search for truth or enlightenment. Martin (2008) describes the immersion-emersion stage as follows "an individual completely withdraws from dominant culture ideologies and immerses within African American culture". Feelings of black pride develop by dissipating feelings of anger and guilt as an increase in pride continues to develop. As they enter the internalization stage, they are able to incorporate into their feeling of self-concept which is an awareness of self-confidence. They are then able to secure their identity. They are also able to own and accept aspects of pop culture that are healthy and discern out toxic images (Martin, 2008; Spergeon and Myers, 2008).

Another supporting view of Cross' racial identity development can be seen in the work of Sellers' (2008) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyen and Sellers define racial identity as part of an individual's self-concept that is related to their membership within a race. Racial identity is made up of the significance placed on race when defining oneself and personal interpretations on what being black means, which can include educational decisions. Much like Cross's theory of racial identity, Sellers MMRI has four dimensions of African American racial identity: salience, centrality, regard and ideology.

Salience and centrality dimension address race significance within one's definition of self, while regard and ideology address the qualitative meaning one assigns to being black (Neblett, et. al, 2008). The centrality dimension of racial identity focuses on the extent to which race is core to individual self-concept. There are two forms of regard, racial and public/private. Racial regard refers to one's affective and evaluative judgements regarding their race and involves a private and public component. Private regard is the extent to one feels positively or negatively about African Americans and their membership within that group. Public regard contrarily, is the extent that one feels others positively or negatively view African Americans. Racial ideology is a composite of individual beliefs, opinions, and attitudes on how blacks should act. This dimension reflects your personal philosophy about how African Americans should live and interact within society (Neblett, et.al, 2008). From these dimensions four ideologies emerged a nationalist philosophy, characterized by viewpoint that emphasizes the uniqueness of being black; oppressed minority philosophy, characterizes a viewpoint that emphasizes similarities between African Americans and other oppressed groups; assimilationist philosophy which emphasizes African American similarities with the rest of American society; humanist philosophy which lastly emphasizes all human commonalities (Neblett, et. al, 2008). These dimensions allow for the acknowledgement of a complex view of ways African American youth define and develop their racial identity. It is through this identity development that they can access the tools needed to make life changing decisions such as college choice.

While parental support and influence contributes to the college choice process evidence suggests that by having a family member or knowing someone that attended an HBCU increases the likelihood of a student choosing a school based on their race (Freeman and Thomas, 2008). Parents and family members are considered the primary source of socialization and information for youth because they model how to consider, manage, and resolve racial and ethnic issues through verbal and nonverbal interactions and messages. The racial socialization process is developed in many ways (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin, 2014; Neblet, et.al, 2008). Racial socialization is defined by Neblet, et. al as the transmission of parents' world views about race and ethnicity to children by way of subtle, overt, deliberate and unintended mechanisms (Neblet, et.al, 2008). Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, and Stevenson (2014) define racial socialization as communicating and learning to practice affective behavioral skills to protect and affirm racial self-efficacy. Racial socialization also reappraises and negotiates racially stressful encounters across the developmental lifespan.

Some parents make race related discussions a key parenting point. While others may discuss racial issues only when brought up by the child and others completely de-emphasize racial importance altogether. From these parental driven conversations emerge five primary themes. These include the following: 1) Racial pride messages which highlight the importance of African American unity, teachings on black heritage and instilling positive feelings about being African American. 2) Racial barrier messages focus on making one aware of racial inequalities and creating techniques that deal with coping with racial adversity. 3) Egalitarian messages are messages which focus on coexistence and interracial harmony. 4) Self-worth messages which emphasize individual worth within the context of being black in the modern world. 5) Negative messages focus on reinforcing traditional stereotypes of African Americans (Neblet, et.al, 2008; Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin, 2014). Such messages are important to the child/adolescent racial identity development. Racial identity and socialization create a resiliency that can protect African Americans from racism and discrimination. The protective factors that can increase resiliency and counter the negative effects of media images are: positive family

interactions, exposure to positive culturally relevant information through lived experiences (HBCU), images that convey the importance of black pride, and being aware of racial issues within society (Martin, 2008).

Media Images and Racial Identity Development

Many contributing factors influence the decision to attend college. Racial identity is an important factor in college choice. There are many components that make up a persons' racial identity. Media (television and film) images and African American depictions play an important role in racial identity development. It is through these images that a person sees who they are within the society they identify and are a part of. "Viewers with high volume television watching can begin to adapt the views of the world being worse than what it is and therefore, developing a mistrust of people around them (Adams-Bass, Stevenson and Kotzin, 2014). Adams-Bass, Stevenson and Kotzin (2014) discuss the idea of cultivation theory being based around the assumption that the primary source of American storytelling is television. They further suggest that exposure to high rates of television watching leads viewers to internalize the images or stories and representations as a reality. When applying cultivation theory to African American youth television viewing habits, which are the highest, it is suggested that these youth will accept the images seen on screen as acceptable and expected behavior for black people (Adams-Bass, Stevenson and Kotzin, 2014; Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, and Stevenson, 2014).

While the quantity of African American images on television has increased over the last decade, the quality of these images has not (Punyant-Carter, 2008; Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, and Stevenson, 2014; Fujioka, 2005; Hall and Smith, 2012). Early film and television shows featured white actors in blackface whose character portrayals were exaggerated or distorted representations of black people as uncivilized, illiterate and/or unintelligent. These images helped perpetuate and create the status quo idea of blacks being inferior and undeserving of some basic civil rights like quality education or an education at all. While these images of animalism were created with little knowledge, other characterizations featured blacks as subservient hired help whose primary desire was to please their white employers (Adams-Bass, Stevenson and Kotzin, 2014).

> "Over the course of 150 years from 1769 to about 1927, minstrels would become an institution revered by whites for its dehumanizing yet somehow entertaining characterization of blacks as darkies and whites as ordinary, normal, and cultured ladies and gentlemen…. indicative of both their attitudes about blacks and their own self perceptions. (Jackson, 2006)"

These negative perceptions continued to be carried out throughout the next decade of television history. According to an article by Stamps, before the 1960s dominant roles of "coon," "buffoon," and "pickaninnies" were the African American characters on television, thus creating a visual stereotype as a loud and conniving race (Stamps, 2017). These roles continued throughout the 1960s even during the civil rights movement. Throughout the 1970s television showed a slight improvement in African American portrayals. Stamps describe 1980s television, as an arena where African Americans were on equal footing with their nonminority counterparts, but dramatic series still lacked diversity (Stamps, 2017). He continues by stating the 1980s were treated as a renaissance for positive African American portrayals on television that contradicted the negative images of prior decades. It was during these times that television and film showed blacks in settings such as higher education and positive employment positions. These images will

have very impactful outcomes by influencing generations of students to attend colleges that focus on African American needs.

Television in the 1980's was groundbreaking for the African American portrayal. It was in 1984 that a black television family made history and set a precedent for television situation comedy's black families, black education and the portrayal of African Americans that can still be felt in present day minority and family television shows. *The Cosby Show* aired in the fall of 1984 and its purpose was to break free of the racist stereotypes depicted in the sitcoms of the 1970's (Crooks, 2014). This program has been characterized as both a socially progressive, positive influence on beliefs about blacks and as a socially regressive apology for a racist system (Bell, 1993). Dr. Poussaint suggested that *The Cosby Show*, invoked responses about race (Crooks 2014). Decades of minstrel stereotypes permeated the beliefs among people about the definition of blackness, which situation comedies like *Good Times, The Jefferson's, 227*, and *Amen* embodied. Whereas *The Cosby Show* depicted a family that happened to be black, *The Jefferson's* emphasized blackness undeniable to viewers, which discouraged an integrated audience (Crooks,2014). *The Cosby Show* made history by becoming the first African American family sitcom to be number one in Nielsen Ratings for five consecutive seasons (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cosby_Show). Not only did *The Cosby Show* portray positive images of black life but along with its spinoff show, *A Different World,* they were the only show to consistently showcase higher education specifically HBCU's as a gateway to success in life (Matabane and Merritt, 2014). It was during this time that research suggests a positive relationship between viewing these two shows and HBCU enrollment (Johnson, 2018; Williams, 2018; Matabane and Merritt, 2014; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). *The Cosby Show* inspired a creation of new black films and television shows that featured HBCU student life, encouraged existing and future situation comedies to include visual and dialog representation of HBCU's and possibly encouraged generations to attend an HBCU (Matabane and Merritt, 2014; Williams, 2018).

By the 1990's television portrayals of African Americans took on a more diverse role within comedies and dramas. However, the amount of programs varied from season to season and remained inconsistent, thus resulting in extended periods of little to no African American television shows. As time continued, television continued to fantasize black life and avoid real societal issues of the time. Television tended to shift viewers to a place where real life issues did not affect the families and people we enjoy on our screens.

News media provides ongoing, daily, hourly, visual and written messages of African Americans and their lives. It has the potential to combat decades of stereotypes and negative images of African Americans due to its ability to be seen more often than television shows which can have a much bigger impact because it is based upon real lived experiences. News media reaches more viewers than most media platforms (Stamps, 2017; Fujioka, 2005). In news media, most images of African Americans are of them being poor, perpetrators of crime, and victims of violence within their own community. A national survey based on representative samples of ethnic groups revealed that about half of the black respondents felt they were unfairly treated in televised crime news, and 62% of them felt upset at least once a week with news coverage about blacks (Fujioka, 2005). Even though African Americans make up a low level of living below the poverty line, the focus on poor African American families is the image constantly being reinforced in news media. Many viewers relate welfare and government financial support with African American issues, however research has shown that white American welfare recipients are 40.2% while African Americans make up only 25.7% (Stamps, 2017). The 2009-2010

National Center for Education Statistics stated that African Americans received college degrees increasingly by 89%, 53%, and 109% for associates, bachelors and master's degrees (Stamps, 2017). However, in news media African American education attainment and wealth are rarely discussed. Such statistics promote the reality of African Americans being multidimensional instead of defined by stereotypical images of the past which can deter a positive development of one's racial identity.

Stamps (2017) defines "stereotypes as a set of beliefs about a group concerning specific characteristics or attributes that may or may not be true." He further states that stereotypes are not always negative. But when they are they can damage and victimize groups, and in turn create distance and inferiority among individuals (racial identity development), especially when the dominant or hegemonic power is the one presenting the ideas (Stamps, 2017). Martin describes film and TV historian Donald Bogle's, five and other common distorted misrepresentation of African Americans in media, that can be argued, still currently seen on television shows and various others media forms(Martin, 2008; Bogle, 2001):

- The Tom or "Good Negro"- Socially acceptable, submissive, often insulted but would not turn against the slave master (white superiority).
- The Mammy- Closely related to the comic coon and often depicted as fat, fiercely independent, ill-tempered, and often troublemaking.
- The Mulatto- They are accepted and looked kindly upon due to their half white genealogy.
- The Buck- Who was represented as big, over-sexed, savage like and dangerous to society.
- The Coon- Who is unreliable, lazy and spends all their time eating watermelon and speaking poor English. This character was mainstreamed by the black actor Stepin Fetchit.
- The Pickaninny- The harmless black child whose eyes would pop, and hair stand on end at the slightest provocation.
- Uncle Remus- Who was satisfied with his place in life as a slave or servant, harmless and naive.
- The Jezebel- Who was seductive, beguiling, and lewd.
- The Sapphire- Who was angry, domineering, loud and emasculating.
- The Sambo- Who was always happy go lucky, laughing, musical and sub servient.

Although these images have evolved over time they can still be seen in some of the most popular forms of media today that continue to influence our youth and shape their identity. These new stereotyped versions of previous negative portrayals of black life reduce African Americans to an image, behavior or sound bite instead of a human being (Martin, 2008). It is the effects of these images that can cause a negative racial identity, thus creating the relevancy for HBCU's. Presently, we have a number of mainstream black actors and actresses that better reflect the diversity and reality of the African American experience, in prime-time television and feature film roles (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, and Stevenson, 2014). Television shows such as *Grown-ish* and Beyoncé's Netflix special that highlighted her Coachella performance are attempting to continue the trend of media positively impacting higher education and African American youth. *Grown-ish* is a spinoff show much like its predecessor *A Different World* that centers on young life at a college campus. However, the difference with *Grown-ish* is it is based on a fictional college campus that is a PWI. The main characters are African American, Latinx,

White and Indian (Williams, 2018). Although it is a show that centers around a black main lead female character, the show does not just address black issues. *Grown-ish* addresses the topics that this current generation is experiencing and needs to discuss (Williams, 2018). It is a positive show that relates to most college students and can influence those that are deciding on college.

      Beyoncé's Coachella performance highlighted HBCU's marching band performances. In this series, she showcased a behind the scenes look at how the training, dance numbers and the actual performance became to be, by utilizing actual students from HBCU's such as Spelman College. It was *Beyoncé's* goal in this performance to hopefully inspire more students to enroll in HBCU's (Berman, 2019). While the impact of these shows may be unknown as of right now, these efforts show how important media images contribute to racial identity and the influence to attend an HBCU. A post racial society is defined as a society in which racial constructs or racism no longer impede or influence attitudes or outcomes of people traditionally disadvantaged because of race and ethnicities (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, and Stevenson, 2014). Youth today are generationally removed from the racial and social inequalities that plagued the early twentieth century and the violence and abrupt discrimination that propelled the civil rights movement. However, these issues are still relevant today and support the need for students to attend an HBCU.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities Creation and Purpose

      "Education, then, according to the more liberal and dominant segments of missionary philanthropists was intended to prepare a college-bred Black leadership to uplift the Black masses from the legacy of slavery and the restraints of the postbellum caste system" (Freeman & Thomas, 2002).

      Palmer explains the history of Historically Black Colleges starting in 1837, before the Civil War. Cheyney University in Pennsylvania was one of several colleges founded to educate African American students (Palmer, 2010). Quaker philanthropist, Richard Humphrey bequeathed a large portion of his estate to establish Cheyney University. Shortly after, the establishment of Lincoln University followed (Harper, 2019). After the Civil War, with the help of the Freedman's Bureau, other black educational institutions were created. The Freedman's Bureau was a governmental organization that operated between 1865 until 1870 to help improve the lives of freedmen (emancipated slaves), refugees and poor whites. Other organizations contributed to the creating and formation of HBCU's such as African American churches, and private philanthropist like the Carnegie foundation (Palmer, 2010). With the exception of Howard University, Fisk University, and Meharry Medical College, other so-called colleges and universities served as multilevel schools that offered secondary education, college prep and some college level courses. Their educational focus was to train teachers, missionaries and future black leaders. Only 2,600 African American students who were mainly male, participated in higher education during this time (Palmer, 2010). Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois played an influential role in designing the curriculum for African American higher education. Booker T. Washington who was self-educated, believed that African American education should be focused on industrial education that included manual labor skills, and racial separation in order to succeed in society. In contrast, W.E.B. DuBois believed in racial integration and that African American education should be liberal arts focused. Deciding on which curriculum of thought was to be focused on was not a decision made by African Americans, but by the white controlled agencies that financially funded the school (Palmer, 2010). In spite of the differing opinions of curriculum, the agreed main goal of African American education was to prepare

black leaders or social guides for participation in the political economy of the New South (Freeman and Thomas, 2002; Gasman, 2013).

By the 1920's over 100 colleges and universities catering to the education of African Americans specifically, were established within the United States. These schools were bred out of legal inequalities that were meant to demolish them, like the Morrill Act of 1862 and the 1896 clause of *separate but equal*, but instead spurred their establishment and staple within African American educational history. Harper (2019) describes an educational shift within the mid-twentieth century, as an unlikely foe to African American higher education: college desegregation. *Brown v. Board of Education* brought an end to the separate but equal ruling from *Plessy v Ferguson*, but that was mainly limited to elementary and secondary education. It wasn't until 1956, that the decision from *Hawkins v. Board of Control* introduced desegregation in higher education settings. However, the decision from the Supreme Court was vague in its ruling and failed to disassemble the HBCU system. This intent was not seen until 1964, when then President Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Civil Right Act, which initiated a variety of programs and initiatives designed to promote African American recruitment and retention at predominantly white colleges and universities (PWI) (Harper, 2019).   Longtime President of Morehouse College, Benjamin Mays, was early in voicing the idea of desegregation having an unintended consequence on HBCU enrollment. He felt that the implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a blatant attack on HBCU existence, asking "How long before all public historically Black colleges are under siege (Harper, 2019, p.111.). By the end of the 60's and throughout the 70's HBCU were fighting for survival with a recruitment war with PWI's to retain African American students. HBCU's were no longer the sole choice for higher education among African Americans.   There were now opportunities for educational advancement at prestigious white institutions that were previously blocked for people of color to gain the same degrees as their non-minority peers. During the 70's and 80's PWI's had an increase of 40% in African American enrollment, HBCU only experienced a growth half as much (Harper, 2019).

Affirmative action in higher education was created to give access to African Americans at prestigious predominantly white institutions. It created a percentage that was a guarantee for minority student entrance. However affirmative action was challenged and received Supreme Court attention, when a white student was denied admission to the University of Washington Law School. He felt that his admission was denied due to the University having to set aside space for minority students. A similar case at the University of California medical school got a Supreme Court ruling of the University to discontinue affirmative action practices (Harper, 2019; Gasman, 2013). With the turn of the century, affirmative programs that gave access to minorities were now being called out for reverse racism. Enrollment for African American students at PWI's had begun to see a decrease. However, by this time, HBCU's had already suffered from lack of steady enrollment. In 2001, only 13% of African American college students were enrolled at HBCU's (Harper, 2019; Freeman and Thomas, 2002; Acker, 2010).

With the college choice process so complex, research has found that for African Americans, they are influenced by race (students' racial identity), socioeconomic status and academic preparedness. In a 2010 study by VanCamp et. al., studying 109 Howard University undergraduates, it was found that students with minimum connections to African American culture growing up, were more inclined to attend HBCUs because they lacked cultural awareness and strong racial identity were found more inclined to attend HBCU's (Johnson, 2018; Freeman,1999). Freeman found in 1999, that African American students in predominantly white high schools were more likely to consider attending an HBCU than students at a predominantly

black school. Research has shown that, high school student racial experiences are similar to minority college students attending PWI's that often experience feelings of isolation, alienation of peers, marginalized and/or tokenized due to their minority status. Freeman also stated that some students experienced discontent with their high school curriculum and its lack of knowledge and history of African Americans. Consequently, these students felt a lack of connection to African American culture and felt the need to immerse themselves and learn more about the culture by surrounding themselves within an environment that will educate them on their heritage, like attending an HBCU (Johnson, 2018; Freeman, 1999; Acker, 2010). A study conducted by Johnson, investigating the reasons impacting a students choice of college of academically competitive students attending four private HBCU's: Hampton University, Howard University, Morehouse College and Spellman College had significant findings on African American students' decision-making process. It was found that three major factors contributed to African American students' decision to attend an HBCU: these included 1) the need to be in a predominantly black environment (racial identity), 2) the reputation of the programs offered that aligned with the students' interest and 3) the availability of financial assistance (Johnson, 2018; Gasman, 2013). The desire to attend a school in an all-black environment stemmed from various experiences. These experiences come from interactions with family that promote HBCU education, teachers or others that may promote a positive perception of attending an HBCU. One student was quoted saying:

> My mom went to Spelman and then Meharry for medical school and my dad went to Morehouse for undergrad. My older sister went to Howard…. My vision of college was crafted by my sister-all the friendships she developed, what she learned, and she was doing really well in life, so I was like "wow, I want to do well like my sister, so I should just go to the same schools she went to (Johnson, 2018, p.159)"

Whether parents, teachers or friends influenced a student's decision to attend an HBCU it was a personal connection with the school environment that prompted them to ultimately attend an HBCU for their higher education.

Influences on attending an HBCU

Studies have shown that HBCU's promote nurturing and supportive learning environments that enhance African American students' academic and intellectual knowledge, foster a sense of self and self-efficacy, instill a sense of social responsibility and community leadership and expand the educational and career aspirations of their students (Johnson, 2018; Van Camp, Barden and Sloan, 2010). Many reasons can be attributed to choosing an HBCU as a college of choice. With the current issues in the country surrounding race and politics that have been a constant in media, black students are choosing HBCU's to "feel the need for a place to go that has them in mind" (Pratt, 2016).

Media Influences on HBCU Decision

Within a 2018 study conducted by Johnson, all of the participants were heavily influenced by the media in shaping their interest in attending an HBCU (Johnson, 2018). It was through these images that students identified and helped shaped their racial identity which contributed to their decision to imagine themselves on a college campus, more specifically a black college campus. With a number of television shows featuring black actors and the black

college experience, no show was more influential on HBCU's than *A Different World*. *A Different World* premiered on network television in the fall of 1987. It was based around *The Cosby Show* character Denise Huxtable's experiences attending her parents fictitious HBCU-Hillman College (Kimble, 2017). This show was just as ground breaking as its mentor show *The Cosby Show* was to African American culture. Even the show's theme song was inspirational as it hinted at an ancient black proverb: that "good enough" isn't the standard we're held to which is a principle reinforced at HBCU's, due to the history of black education or the lack thereof. *A Different World* took the culture of institutions born from segregation and placed them in mainstream media, capturing the African ancestral spirit of a period in which Afrocentrism and popular culture combined to celebrate a creation of black racial identity. It was characters from this show that Johnson's participants felt and reflected on their racial identity and experiences as described by one of the studies participants:

> The show centered on life in HBCU experience…. but more specifically the intricacies in the African American community. You had characters who came from very affluent families, from working class families, from single parent families; characters who came from two-parent households; characters who come from all across the country- and that speaks to the complexity of the community as well as the HBCU's (Johnson, 2018, p.161).

Black culture is popular culture and HBCU culture is a facet of that (Kimble, 2017). According to Fader's online magazine article about the show's influence on higher education, "from the debut of *The Cosby Show* in 1984 until the end of *A Different World* in 1993, American higher education grew by 16.8 percent," Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough, president of Dillard University, told the *New York Times* in 2010. He continued stating, "During the same time period, historically black colleges and universities grew by 24.3 percent — 44 percent better than all of higher education (Kimble, 2017)."

Social/Political Influences on HBCU Decision

While 2009 experienced a downward shift that impacted HBCU enrollment due to the economic recession, by 2016, 11 HBCUs reported a significant increase in enrollment within their freshman class (Johnson, 2019). Johnson further attributes this resurgence of interest in HBCUs to the heightened increase of racially charged incidents against blacks attending PWIs, while others attributed it to effective strategic marketing by HBCU leaders and administration. Williams and Palmer (2016) explain the idea of then presidential candidate Donald Trump's fueling a rise in hate crimes in society and on college campuses, thus mounting an emergence in growth of the number of students interested in attending an HBCU. These students feel that attending an HBCU will offer a safe haven and escape from the racism that is being experienced throughout America. Williams and Palmer further state that this sentiment is echoed by Dillard University President, Walter Kimbrough following a series of 2016 protests at University of Missouri that brought attention to social injustices of black students on campus. It was during these times that #BlackLivesMatter was also raising awareness of social injustice and systemic racism, and in response, HBCUs across the nation experienced an increase in applications and enrollment for black students (Williams and Palmer, 2016). Kimbrough posited that black students were not just seeking a safe space in returning to HBCUs, they were also seeking more interactions with black faculty, a black centered curriculum, and an overall empowering campus experience (Williams and Palmer, 2016).

Conclusion

African American participation in higher education has always been met with much struggle and demise (Freeman, 1999). Historically African Americans have always fought to participate in any form of education. Segregated legislation made it against the law to teach slaves to read and write (Harper,2019; Freeman and Thomas, 2002). As a result of these laws, African Americans began to realize that education was the key to success and in order to succeed, education had to be for us and by us. It was this forward thinking that helped create and establish some of the first historically black colleges and universities. Black colleges and universities have grown from focusing on just liberal arts or skilled labor as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington wanted, to such disciplines as science, technology, law and medicine (Harper, 2019).

Choosing a college has become a decision that takes much research and thought. Hossler and Gallagher explain the decision to attend a college as a three staged process (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000). For African American students choosing a college is not just about academics and location but how one's racial identity will impact their experience. Media fulfills certain functions within our lives such as entertainment, in addition to contributing to how we view ourselves and discover who we are. Matabane and Merritt (2014), posed the question: If blacks can learn to devalue black institutions by watching negative media stereotypes then is it possible for black youths to associate positive attributes to HBCU's after repetitive viewing of their positive representations? Research conducted by Jennifer Johnson (2018) proved this theory to be true when including factors of student choice of HBCU. Positive shows like *A Different World* heavily influenced students' choice in considering an HBCU for higher education (Williams, 2018). Seeing these examples of positivity, African American youth can view these shows as examples of how they see themselves in society as well as HBCU life. These representations play an important role as to how we analyze social, cultural, ethnic and racial differences (Davis and Gandy, 1999). It is through these lenses that African American students learn to develop the resources, tools, and information needed to discover themselves along their college journey and choose a school that will not only educate but contribute to their cultural growth.

Process

Project Design/Method

Introduction

Qualitative data analysis is a methodology that focuses on the discovery and description of the data collected. In this type of data collection, the search for underlying meanings, patterns and processes are important instead of the numerical relationship between the different variables (Altheide, 2000). Qualitative data analysis allows room for a deeper examination of the data collected. It causes the researcher to create hypothesis on what the documents mean and how this meaning can be interpreted for future research. For this research study the chosen methodology used is qualitative data analysis (document review).

Rationale for Research Design

The use of internet/websites to assist with the college choice process has continued to grow over the past years. More students are utilizing online resources in addition to the information they may encounter from their high school counselor, teacher, or family. A 2001 study by Poock and Lefond found that college bound high school students relied upon the internet resources when applying to colleges or universities. In 1998, a study of internet use by Strauss, found that among prospective students most of them when searching for institutions to apply and attend did utilize Web resources (Poock, 2006). This capstone will utilize a qualitative document analysis that will review guides and resources for college planning as the source of data collection and methodology. This document review will identify how the materials used for attracting students are aligned with best practices in recruiting and retaining African American students (Bowen, 2009). The focal point for this research is to determine if a culturally competent resource guide is needed for African American students. Qualitative document analysis is important for this research because the focus is specifically looking at how African American students use college planning resources (handbooks/workbooks) and if these resources cater to their needs to attend an HBCU or focus on their racial identity. This study is an in-depth look at how college planning resources consider or don't consider the importance of racial identity. Research has shown that African American students consider race when making their college choice decision (McDonough, 1997; Woodley and Figiel, 2004), however race or racial identity is not a factor in college planning resources. I plan to review college planning guides to determine if there is a missing link in racial identity for black students and examine the extent of racial identity is addressed in online college planning resource guides and workbooks.

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Research Setting

The term document refers to an assortment of written records, visual data, artifacts, and even archival data (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). As a result, the documents needed for this review are college planning workbooks/handbooks. This research is important to higher education because it can show how African American students are using racial identity to inform their college decisions and thus possibly help increase the enrollment in HBCU's. Reviewing and understanding how college planning resources consider racial identity can impact the research of African Americans and their decision to attend college in general. This study can

also help the secondary education sector by shining a light on what high school college counselors may need to discuss when working with black students to plan their college future.

Sources of Data

The college planning resources that will be gathered are those that cater to high school students and incoming freshmen or first year students. There are six college planning workbooks that will be reviewed and analyzed in this study. These college handbooks have been collected from higher education planning programs, two private schools and a state college planning program. For the sake of this research project media images and other current influences on college choice are not being examined through this collection of data. This research study will focus on internet-based college planning handbooks and workbooks, due to them being easier to access for the general public and non-biased in content (no financial obligation or ties to any specific college or university). The documents reviewed are also only internet-based resources due to the limited ability of obtaining resources directly from high schools or college counselors. A qualitative document review allows for analysis and comparisons of college planning resources to determine their influence on college choice.

1. California Students and Their Families College Readiness Workbook

The first source of data used is a college readiness workbook for California students and their families. This workbook was produced by University of California's (UC) Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP), a higher education program copyrighted in 2011. According to this workbook, the EAOP focuses on academic advising and building college knowledge by helping educationally disadvantaged students complete a rigorous education program that will prepare them to apply to college and financial aid. This workbook is for prospective students to consider an education at a UC or CSU school. Los Angeles County is the second largest population of African Americans and California is the fifth largest African American population state in the US, according to the US Census Bureau 2010 through 2014 (Chapman, Comeaux and Contreras, 2020). California has no historically black colleges or universities and this handbook is specifically geared to the UC and CSU college system and prospective students. Established in 1869, the University of California (UC) system is a group of highly regarded and esteemed public research focused universities in California. The list of campuses is as follows:

- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Irvine
- UCLA
- UC Merced
- UC Riverside
- UC San Diego
- UC San Francisco (graduate programs only)
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz

The schools in UC have large enrollments with over 20,000 undergraduate students. UCLA has the biggest undergraduate enrollment of all the UC schools (Muniz, 2020). UC has

over 280 thousand students offering undergraduate and graduate education. Table 1 below displays University of California student demographics.

Table 1. University of California Percentage of Students and Comparisons, 2020

Percentage of students and comparisons statewide-nationwide			
	Campuses	**California**	**United States**
Asian (including South and East Asians)	30%	15%	6%
Black	4%	7%	13%
Hispanic (of any race, including Chicanos and White Hispanics)	21%	39%	18%
Non-Hispanic White	25%	38%	61%
Native American	(<1%)	2%	1%
International student	16%	N/A	N/A
Other	3%	N/A	N/A

These schools are top ranked, extremely competitive to attend and considered some of the best public universities in the nation. Their total minority student enrollment is 55% comprised of Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American (Muniz, 2020).

The California State University (CSU) system is another group of public universities located in California. CSU is the largest public four-year university system in the United States (Muniz, 2020). While the CSU schools are not considered as competitive with the UC schools, they offer a quality academic at an affordable price for its in state residents. The CSU system was established in 1972 is comprised of 23 schools that all have undergraduate programs. The following is a list of schools that make up the CSU system:

- CSU Bakersfield
- CSU Channel Islands
- CSU Chico
- CSU Dominguez Hills
- CSU East Bay
- CSU Fresno
- CSU Fullerton
- Humboldt State University
- CSU Long Beach
- CSU Los Angeles
- Cal Maritime Academy
- CSU Monterey Bay
- CSU Northridge
- Cal Poly Pomona
- CSU Sacramento

- CSU San Bernardino
- San Diego State University
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
- CSU San Marcos
- Sonoma State University
- CSU Stanislaus

Approximately 482,000 students attend CSU, which employs 53,000 faculty and staff. CSU Northridge has the largest enrollment with about 35,000 undergrads. Although CSU has a diverse student enrollment it is known for catering to minority and low-income students. Table 2 shows CSU student demographics compared to other California schools and to schools nationwide.

Table 2. California State University Percentage of Students and Comparisons, 2020

Percentage of students and comparisons statewide-nationwide			
	Campuses (2018)	California (2015)	United States (2015)
Native American or American Indians	0.2%	2%	1%
Hispanic and Latino Americans (Includes Chicanos, Other Latino and White Hispanics)	N/A	38%	18%
Mexican-American or Chicano	33.2%	N/A	11%
Other Latino American	8.3%	N/A	N/A
Non-Hispanic White Americans	23.0%	39%	61%
Non-Hispanic Asian American	11.5%	15%	6%
Filipino American	4.1%	N/A	1%
Pacific Islander American	0.3%	N/A	N/A
Non-Hispanic African American	4.0%	7%	13%
Non-Hispanic Multiracial Americans	4.4%	N/A	N/A
Unknown	4.6%	N/A	N/A
International students	6.4%	N/A	N/A

Their total student diversity enrollment is at 66% and consists of Native Americans, Hispanic and Latino Americans, Mexican Americans, Other Latino Americans, Non Hispanic Asian Americans, Filipino American, Pacific Islander American, Non Hispanic African American, and Non Hispanic Multiracial American (California State University, 2020). Unlike UC schools, CSU schools focus on developing students professional and practical skills that will make them job ready upon completion of their undergraduate program (Muniz, 2020).

The UC workbook is divided into five different sections over 17 pages of information. Although it is geared for California students and their families, this workbook can be used for students outside of the state and for those who may be interested in attending any of the UC and CSU schools. The sections are titled: The Path to college, Preparing to Apply, Footwork, Paying and Saving for College and Workbook Tools- which includes a glossary of terms and online resources. This workbook begins with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. about how faith is taking the first step even in uncertainty. The first page also points out the relationship between education and earnings and poses the question with answers as to why even go to college. The author also made it a point to mention that although this workbook is targeted and intended for the UC and CSU systems, it can be used to apply to any college or university. Within the second edition the author mentions entrance requirements, ACT/SAT scores and information on writing a personal statement. The personal statement should involve specific examples of the unique contributions a student will bring to the college they are attending. This section further explained the focus of the ACT and SAT's. The California higher educational system at a glance was also highlighted within this section. The college knowledge subtitle emphasizes the importance of gathering information about different colleges to ensure their "rightness" is for you (p.4). "College Knowledge is the information you gather about specific colleges and their "rightness" for you, and about financial aid, housing and other practical aspects of college. Researching the campuses that best suit your needs and academic strengths should begin early (UC Early Academic Outreach Program, 2011)." In Part Three, titled Footwork, is a step by step guide for parents and students during the four years of high school. This section provides very specific steps such as enrollment in courses that meet "a-g" college entrance requirements and registering with the NCAA initial eligibility clearinghouse within the summer of the students junior year. Part Three ends with a set of college readiness frequently asked questions (FAQs). The next section introduces the reader advice and tips on paying and saving for college. This section explains financial aid options, scholarships, work study, loans and college savings plan to finance education. The author also points out the average college cost in California for the 2013-14 academic year. Highlighted in this section is California in state resident, UC's blue + gold opportunity plan which is an in-state tuition reduction plan for residents that earn below 80,000 a year and qualify for financial aid. This section ends with a FAQ at the end of this section centering on financial aid and related concerns. The last section is a glossary of terms and a list of online resources, that provide information on college readiness, paying and saving for college, and information for student, parents and educators.

2. College Planning 101

College Planning 101 is the second workbook that was reviewed for this project. It is in its 2nd edition and is a 32-page workbook created by Kirk A. Macbeth. This workbook was copyrighted in 2008. Kirk A. Macbeth is an American author, private educational consultant and

marketing contractor, according to his Amazon biography. His intention as stated in the preface of this workbook, in writing this manual is to help individuals navigate through the process of choosing the right college. Twenty eight different topics are explored throughout this workbook. The workbook starts with an introduction about the author's college experience and his reasoning for writing and creating this manual. The Introduction suggests that the process of finding the right college should start with finding yourself.   This is followed by a list of successful people who were discouraged, ridiculed by others or denied opportunities at various stages in their lives before becoming successful. What is next is the topic of selecting a major. Within this section he describes some tips for how to pick a major that aligns with your goals in life. Macbeth provides five easy steps to succeed in college. These steps include the following: 1) understanding why you are going to college- for future goals and aspirations; 2) pick a college for your major- your major should be based on the career field you see yourself acquiring; 3) talk to people in the field – research your field of study by asking people; 4) shadow someone – finding someone that does what you plan on doing; and 5) lastly, placement – where are graduates working after graduation. Macbeth continues this topic of career path, with discussions in next section describing his "career tree" (p. 8) as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Macbeth (2008) Career Tree
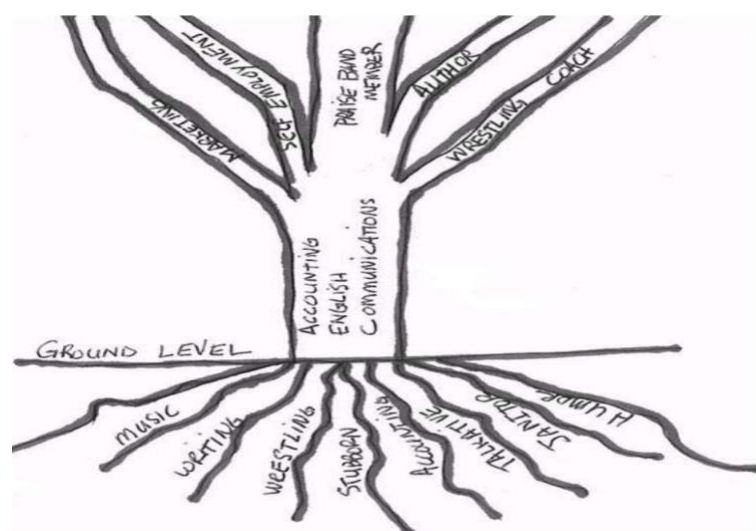
The career tree is explained by Macbeth as:

> Understanding that when you go to college, you begin to develop into the person you are to become, we thus emerge from the ground and begin to take shape. The roots of the tree now establish a solid trunk for growth. That growth as well as expansion will come from your course selections and or the major field of study you pursue.   As the trunk expands with knowledge, you grow in different directions. These directions are represented by the branches of the tree (p.8).

Macbeth shares that this career tree reflects his teen years and the direction he took. He uses two sections to briefly discuss career planning and self-evaluation. The section on choosing the right college, a complex step in the process, has also been the reason a guide was created to help narrow the search. A college selection matrix compares colleges by five differing traits: characteristics, quality, quantity, affordability, aid (financial) and acceptance.   Within this

section student diversity is mentioned. Macbeth admits that student diversity although important, is a factor that is not well documented. "Under acceptance there can be another factor that is not well documented. Student diversity is a point of interest to many colleges. (Macbeth, 2008)" He recommends students go out of their comfort zone so that they can experience and meet more diverse people. He defines student diversity as where a person is from, race, gender, or any other category. It can also mean the acceptance at a school where the result was not expected. This section is followed by college location and a location assessment. The author compares the costs between a two year vs. four year college experience. With the next few sections centering around financial assistance and paying for college, this handbook discusses the school visit and how to write the college essay within the last few pages. The last page of this workbook is a college budget that can be used for students' first year of college.

3. 2019-20 High School Student Workbook

The 2019-20 high school student workbook is a product of Oklahoma College Assistance Program (OCAP).   This workbook is specifically created for high school students.   The Oklahoma state higher education system is comprised of 25 colleges and universities- including two research universities, 10 regional universities, one public liberal arts university and 12 community colleges- also with 11 constituent agencies and two university centers. The state of Oklahoma is also home to Langston University the state's only HBCU.   The OCAP is an operating division of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. According to their website, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education was created in 1941 from a vote that amended the state's constitution in order to create this new system. The State Regents prescribe academic standards of higher education, determine functions and courses of study at state colleges and universities, grant degrees and approve each public college's and university's allocations in addition to tuition and fees within the limits set by the state legislatures. They also manage scholarships and special programs. The State Regents operate OneNet, the states most advanced technology network and the Oklahoma College Assistance Program, which provides college access, aid awareness, financial literacy and student loan management programs and services for students and parents (www.okhighered.org).

The Oklahoma College Assistance Program (OCAP) was founded in 1965 by state legislature and serves as the state's designated guarantor for the Federal Family Education Loan Program. OCAP provides college access, aid awareness, financial literacy and student loan management programs and services that benefit students, parents, schools and community partners (www.ocap.org). An initiative of OCAP is the U can go 2, that is a college access program helping students and families plan, prepare and pay for higher education. It is through this initiative that this workbook is found and created for.

The 2019-20 High School Student Workbook starts with an introduction page that provides an overview of the UCanGo2 program that is a part of the OCAP. This workbook is 50 pages long and divided into 6 different parts: Why go to college, What do I want to be, How do I get there, Where do I go, How do I pay for it and a Glossary. The Why Go to College section addresses the value of higher education. It includes a brainstorming activity that challenges the student to write their thoughts or concerns about higher education or obtaining a degree. They challenge some of the myths associated with higher education and pursuing a degree. Another brainstorming activity centers on jobs and careers, with additional questions to further generate your thinking on future pathways. This section also includes statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that hights the salary difference in percentages for no degree, some college, associates

and bachelor's degree. Section Two focuses on exploring careers and majors and also briefly the topic of a career vs a job. Included are some activities for the student to complete and an example of the career assessment that UCanGo2 provides. It further mentions the varying career clusters and gives steps to develop a career plan. This section also presents the ten fastest growing occupations in Oklahoma requiring a Bachelors and an Associate's degree including their salary. Section Three starts out with the topic of taking the right classes in high school if college is in your future. It further explains how to strengthen study habits at home and in school, ACT classes, advance placement classes and extracurricular activities. The author mentions the Oklahoma Promise within this section, which is a program that allows residents to earn a scholarship for their tuition. This section ends with a student class tracker that will help students organize the classes they have taken and their achievements. In Section Four, the author defines the many types of colleges but made no mention of the one historically black college in the state. This author further defined types of schools by discussing the difference between urban, suburban and rural schools. There was also a campus visit checklist and a list of places to visit while on a campus tour. The final section is dedicated to the process of how to finance higher education. This section defines financial aid and explains the various federal student grant programs. It is also pointed out that students of Native American heritage may need to contact their tribal office for information on additional or specific grants or scholarships they may be able to qualify for. This section ends with an instructional guide to completing the FAFSA. The glossary section is the last section and it gives definitions to various terms that have been discussed within this document or related to college planning.

4.   Jesuit High School Sacramento College Planning Handbook 2019-2020

Jesuit High School Sacramento is located in Carmichael, California. It is an all-boys private four-year catholic college preparatory school that opened its doors to 93 freshman students on September 17, 1963. Over time the school has continued to grow and according to their website, enrolls 1000 students per year. According to a Wikipedia page about the school, it is highly selective and can only accept transfer students in grades 10 and 11. Tuition for this school is over $15,000, but they do offer a tuition assistance program and payment plans. Their average SAT score is a 1280 and their ACT average is a 29, with 83% of their students attending college after high school (www.niche.com). Jesuit High School stands on the idea that their students graduate being prepared for the college road ahead of them.

This college planning handbook is 21 pages long with no table of contents just various headings and sub-headings. The first page begins with college planning dates and deadlines for students Junior and Senior year. The next page briefly describes the school college planning tools, Naviance Student and Collegedata. Naviance student is a college and career readiness software provider that partners with high schools and other educational institutions to provide students with college planning and career assessment tools. Collegedata is a free website that offers college advising and resources for college planning. Naviance is a tool that is used in connection to the high school the student attends.

The next section focuses on timelines for seniors. College admissions testing is highlighted with testing dates for SAT and ACT. The essay or personal statement is described in this workbook including a sample essay with tips. Two pages are dedicated to college athletics and military academies, with resource links and a brief discussion on the National Collegiat Athletic Associations (NCAA). The final few pages cover how to submit applications to private schools through the use of the Common App. The Common App is the name of a website that

streamlines the college application process. The last pages in this workbook are a college document request form and a sample student/parent brag sheet that is needed for Naviance.   This workbook also included some essay prompts that will be asked from the Common App essay. It also included personal insight questions from the UC school system.

5. 2017-2018 College Planning Handbook Saddlebrook Prep

The 2017-2018 college planning handbook Saddlebrook Prep is from Saddlebrook Preparatory School located in Wesley Chapel, Florida. Saddlebrook Preparatory School is a private school founded in 1992. They serve students in grades 3 thru 12 and combine academics with a competitive golf or tennis program. Students at Saddlebrook Prep can either attend school or choose the boarding school option and live on campus. As a private school, Saddlebrook Prep can offer its students the opportunity to train intensively in their sport while also being educated. Golfing students train and golf on the resorts two Arnold Palmer designed courses. These students compete in local, regional, and national tournaments year round. Tennis playing students train on the schools 45 tennis courts in all Grand Slam surfaces, competing in local, national and regional tournaments. Saddlebrook Prep students go on to attend prestigious universities with their respected sport scholarship or become professionals within their sport field (www.saddlebrookprep.com).

This handbook is 35 pages in length and while it has no specific sections there is a table of contents that lists the different headings/topics discussed. There are 24 topics discussed in this handbook. The first page includes the Saddlebrook Prep commitment to excellence that lists the mission statement, vision statement and core values of the school. The college placement and college planning timeline start this handbook's topic of discussion. This section states that in a students' 9_{th} grade the college planning begins. Meetings with the college placement planning team are scheduled and a list of topics are reviewed such as the college application process, SAT/ACT, college visits and rankings and tournament results. This handbook offers a section that addresses what colleges and universities look for in the students they accept. The authors mention that colleges want students who can thrive in their particular environment. They also highlight the importance of picking a school that fits you holistically and not just in one particular area. The next sections review the college choice process and factors to consider and tips on choosing a major. When choosing a major the handbook provides questions that help students narrow their interest academically. Over the next few pages are guidelines and a list of information, resources, and activities the students need to be participating over their complete 4 years of high school. Standardized testing is also covered with a list of testing dates, the difference between ACT and SAT testing and how the testing scores determine the competiveness of a school. This handbook includes a list of questions for students and athletes to ask when participating in campus visits. Because this is a sport focused school, the handbook discusses NCAA requirements and what should be included in an athletic letter of introduction and resume.   Sample letter of introduction to a coach is included with a format that can be easily used for all the colleges a student wants to apply for. The next topic includes the section of the parts of a college application and the factors influencing admission decisions. The parts of a college application lists all required documents that will be needed from students. Factors that influence admission decisions provides a listing of the various factors such as grades, class rank, counselor recommendation, essay writing, etc. These factors are listed with no description other than a mention of the application essay and its importance. This handbook recommends that students sign up and apply to the Common Application website. The last few pages of this

handbook are dedicated to providing internet sites and resources for college planning in addition to a glossary of terms that may be discussed in college planning literature and this handbook.

6. College Planning Handbook- NYC Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Readiness

The college planning handbook from the New York City (NYC) Department of Education was originally written in 2009 by Jane Heapy with the assistance of other contributors. The second edition was in 2011 by the Office of Postsecondary Readiness.   The Office of Postsecondary Readiness was originally called the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation. It was established in 2005 to meet the educational needs of students over the age of 18 but younger than 22 and lacking the needed credits for completion population to graduate them prepared and ready for career and college success. Today the department is called the Office of Postsecondary Readiness with the goal of ensuring every student is equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for graduation and able to pursue higher education (Barrett, 2012).

This handbook was by far the lengthiest of those reviewed with 56 pages and 9 different chapters with an Appendix, Glossary, Index and Notes. Throughout this handbook were student testimonies that spoke to the respective topic in the chapter. Additionally there are symbols throughout the handbook that indicate a discussion with your counselor or advisor or information specific to GED students. This handbook begins with a letter to students from currently enrolled college students highlighting the importance of college planning and encouraging students to pursue their college degree. The introduction sections discuss options after high school and the idea of college being possible for any student. In Options After High School, they acknowledge the fact that finding a job is an option instead of going college. They also indicate that a combination of options can be used by students after they complete high school. In the College is Possible section the author reminds us college is a possibility for any student, and with resources students can be successful. Chapter One covers the following topics: different reasons to choose college, Four key motivations, and talking with people that attended college. The most common reason for attending college is career freedom and flexibility, financial security, adventure and challenge and meeting new people. Career freedom and flexibility give college degree holders increased access to higher paying jobs. Financial security offers stability and opportunities for professional growth (promotions). Adventure and challenge bring on new experiences which leads to new people and new connections. In Chapter Two, the main topics of discussion are deciding if you're college material, getting accepted to college, finding academic support, starting over and handling college. The author chose to address the topic of handling college by stating some common concerns students may have entering college and stating the fact about it. When discussing getting accepted to college, the author mentions that admissions depends on varying factors that contribute to your academic profile. When a student enters college, he or she has the opportunity to start fresh with a clean slate regardless of their high school past experiences. Chapter Three talks about the different types of college options. It is in this chapter that the college system is explained as it covers the explanations of the different degrees offered, public and private college definitions, and two or four year colleges. Within this section is the only mention of HBCU's, even though it is a brief explanation. Because this workbook comes from a state educational agency, it focuses on providing information on the New York State Public and Private colleges and Opportunity Programs. Chapter Four's focus is on how to find the right college for you. The main topics of discussion in this chapter are, choosing a college that's a good fit for you, self-assessment, four key elements to a good college

list, and keeping a chart of your research. In finding a college that will be a good fit, the author recommends three suggestions: assess yourself to find out what you are looking for in a school, do the research to find the meet the criteria from your assessment and create a list of schools to apply to. There is a self-assessment chart listed that students can take. The college research chart is a tool that can help students organize their research on different colleges and help when narrowing down their list of schools. In Chapter Five the focus of discussion are steps in the admission process.   This chapter provides an overview of college admissions process, components of the college application, fee waivers, entrance tests, how to communicate with colleges and staying organized. The steps in the college application process are broken down into 5 stages: 1) Self-Assess- establishing what your needs are from a school; 2) Research- finding a school that fit the needs you identify with, 3) Develop- creating a network of support, submitting your information to the schools and 4) Follow up by confirming that your application is complete. There is another organizational chart for college applications, that can help students when making their final decisions. This section concludes with tips for staying organized such as creating charts and tables, keeping all materials in one folder or place, and maintaining stress management techniques. Chapter Six discusses the affordability of college, with the main topics consisting of, sources of financial aid, college loans, financial aid packages, comparing colleges financial aid packages, and undocumented students financial aid. The chapter starts with a brief explanation of the 3 basic types of financial aid: grants and scholarships, loans and federal work study- campus jobs. There is a list of sources of financial aid that includes federal, state and city government.   Financial aid is broken down and explained over the next few pages with discussion including what the varying types of student loans are. Chapter Seven continues the topic of finances with discussing how to get financial aid. The highlights of discussion in this chapter are financial aid forms, timeframes for completing them, requesting more financial aid and reapplying.   The Free Application of Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), a grant for New York residents are the two main applications needed to be completed for most incoming college students. FAFSA is the foundation of a student's financial aid application process. The TAP is equally important because it provides additional free funding for New York residents only. Like the previous section, this section ends with a financial aid organizer so students can keep track of the financial assistance they receive and the necessary follow up. Chapter Eight returns the discussion of how to make the final college choice. Within this section the highlights covered are good fit vs affordable, comparing financial aid packages, campus visits, accepting a college and deposits. When determining best fit or affordability students can reflect on their charts that was used for organization (from the previous chapters) to help in their decision making.   Campus visits should be a factor in their decision and students should take advantage of many open house opportunities.   The final steps of applying to college is accepting a school. Once a school has been accepted a decision letter is sent out with the deposit information to secure your enrollment for the upcoming school year. The final chapter focuses on how to succeed in college. The main topics in this chapter are getting ready for college, final application and enrollment, what to pack if going away, adjusting to a new environment and long-term success strategies. This chapter starts off with a testimonial from students attending a community college. It discusses how their views on college changed once they started attending and how now they feel confident that they will be successful in finishing college. When getting ready for college, it suggests that you should attend orientation sessions to get yourself accommodated. If going away to school your college of choice may send a suggested list of items and supplies needed for living on or off campus. Success in college

means using your available resources. There are many on-campus resources that students can take advantage of such as libraries, counseling services, health centers, and tutoring programs to name a few. The appendix chapter is filled with resources and charts on high school graduation requirements, planning calendars and college access programs in New York City. The glossary section defines the various terms used within this document, with the workbook concluding with an index.

Data Collection Methods

College planning handbooks were obtained and collected utilizing a Boolean Google search. The words used for the search was "college planning workbooks." This brought over 3 million search results that varied from Amazon books for purchase, to books and resources about college admissions. Data was collected for this research analyzing different college planning workbooks and/or handbooks. These documents were chosen for their length, content organization and resources mentioned within the document. The documents chosen were chose due to the convenience of placement in the search results. Upon looking at the search results first page was a list of workbooks that was examined and it was out of process of elimination that the selection was made. The initial goal was to present a wide range of handboks with varying perspectives, however the data became very similar in content and lacked the variety expected. The workbooks that were reviewed represent a range of types of schools. They are from a Jesuit High School, an independent college planner, private schools and a state college assistance program. Because research says that African American students take more time when considering options for college and consult varying sources of information within their search phase (Van Camp, Barden, Sloan and Clarke, 2009) it was important to view theses online resources to determine if they offer some insight to college choice and if it factors racial identity as a determining component.

When analyzing the data, a protocol checklist was developed to critique the handbooks or workbooks to determine the amount of information related to racial identity. The protocol checklist was created from the aspects that the reviewer thought is missing from a cultrally competent handbook. This checklist asks the reader to determine if the college planning resources they utilize discuss any topics around diversity and racial identity. It was also a way to compare differences and similarities as well as highlighting any tools regarding racial identity. Since it is shown that racial identity does play an impact on African American students' college choice (Williams and Palmer, 2016; Johnson, 2019; McDonough, Antonio and Trent, 1997), it is imperative to look for this aspect when analyzing the data collected. African American students are often underrepresented on most colleges and universities; their needs are often going unrecognized when considering college planning. Research conducted by the US Department of Education (2016) suggests the following areas of focus as suggested ways to meet the needs of a diverse student body. Institutional commitment to promoting student body diversity and inclusion on campus. Research shows that colleges and universities seeking to promote campus diversity identify how diversity relates to their core institutional mission and the unique circumstances of the institution. Diversity across all levels of an institution is the next focus area. Research shows that campus leadership, including a diverse faculty, plays an important role in achieving inclusive institutions. The next focus area is outreach and recruitment of prospective students. Institutions committed to student body diversity can take steps to improve outreach and recruitment to a diverse array of students.

Support services for students represents another focus area. In general, student support services are associated with improved academic outcomes, including after students' first years in college. The last area of focus is an inclusive campus climate. Students report less discrimination and bias at institutions where they perceive a stronger institutional commitment to diversity (US Department of Education, 2016). It is through these focus areas that an analysis protocol (Figure 3) was created to critique the data collected for this research study.

Figure 3. College Planning Handbook Analysis Protocol Checklist (Franklin, 2020)

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college					
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option					
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students					
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor					
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students					
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students					
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate					

This checklist was created for the process of analysis to examine the identified documents. The checklist protocol was used to analyze each document for the outlined areas of topic. This document analysis aided in providing an understanding of how college materials included information for African American students. The checklist was used to measure each of the handbooks individually and then those responses were combined into on general checklist to identify common and overlapping areas.

Ethical Considerations

        The ethical concerns with collecting and using qualitative data analysis, is not being able to measure the effectiveness of the specified college planning handbooks. When searching and gathering the data for this study there was no way to determine if students use these handbooks to help them make decisions or if they are just another list of resources that students collect. Examining this data in regards to the literature presented it can only be assumed that African American students are considering not just pamphlets and resources from their schools and potential schools but also internet resources such as the ones used for this study.

        The delimitations in this research study included the fact that none of the data collected was tested on high school students, and there is no way to determine if students use the collected college planning resources within their college search. Gathering resources for college planning comes from various sources and there is no one specific method or guide used over others. That makes research difficult because there can be so many variables that may be used or there can be none at all and students can rely on information and booklets from the college they are interested in. Many students use different resources when deciding to attend college. It would be overwhelming to look at all the resources students use which could possibly prolong the research. When researching college planning as a topic, not many resources were found that focused on the specific tools used that helped students plan their college choice. There were even fewer studies when looking at how African American students plan their college search. This area of research would benefit by a longitudinal study that can look at trends over a longer specific time period to measure the impact on college choice. HBCU's view their racial pride in the stories of their students. Howard University an HBCU located in D.C, has on its homepage stories of why students chose to attend there. Within these stories they all circle back to the same notion of Howard giving them a voice in their field as an African American and making them proud of who they are and who they will become.

        The limitations of this study included only focusing on college planning guides that were gathered from an internet search. Since the college planning process is usually started within a student's high school the access to information from high schools was limited. High schools do not always post their college material online. Being able to access materials from a high school can be difficult to acquire. Additionally, because, the internet is full of information it can be rather difficult deciding on which type of data to use for document collection. In the case of this study, the data that was chosen was of random selection with no preference given.

Application

Outcomes/Findings

The first research question asked in this study centered on the role media images contribute to racial identity thus influencing a students' college choice. In determining and finding an answer to that question, the data reviewed did not discuss any topics of media influence. No school, college planning organization or author mentioned the idea of students being heavily influenced by media images. The research has concluded that media images does have a significant impact in college choice, specifically in HBCU, but yet none of the handbooks reviewed mentioned or discussed this fact. The fact that there was no mention of media images concludes that a more cultrally competent resource is needed to assist in students' college decision. I reviewed college planning resource workbooks and handbooks. In examining the data using a qualitative document analysis, the second question of what resources are available to African American students that contribute to their college choice was considered. This led to a criteria checklist that was used when comparing the different handbooks.

The California college readiness handbook was the first document reviewed. It was concise and focused on a college readiness timeline for students. The handbook gave great suggestions for activities students should be doing to prepare themselves for college and it also gave an easy to follow timeline that started in a student's freshman year. Utilizing the checklist, this handbook scored mostly no evidence of any information regarding the topics of racial identity or diversity for African American students. This guide was great for providing resources that any student can follow. What it lacked is diversity and any mention of influence on students college choice decisions. California is known for having a diverse population of students, but yet this handbook mentioned no diversity. When examining this handbook and looking for any discussion on the topic of media influence impacting a students college choice, no information was resulted. This handbook did not discuss any cultural influences on students decision to attend college. What it did mention was that students that are ELA can and should reach out to their counselors to assist them in their college planning process. This handbook also offered no resources that will support student diversity. There was only one small mention of a website in their online resources section, which was outdated. This handbook was not a resource geared for African American students.

College Planning 101 was the second document reviewed. It was a very inspirational document that offered many words of encouragement. It hinted at the idea of college being a place of finding yourself so the search for a college should include the factor of a school that is right for who you want to become. It was in this college workbook that the author mentioned the career tree that he created. The career tree idea ties into the thought of how the right college not just expands your mind but enhances you as a person. This handbook was very reflective and used self-evaluation tools and questions throughout the workbook. It mentions diversity when referring to how students are accepted into college. However, when looking at the research question of how can this handbook influence college choice for African American students, it may not be able to do that. It also failed to discuss the topic of how media images can impact a students decision to attend college. This handbook did not disuss any factors on what contributes to a student making their final decision. It also showed mostly no evidence of information regarding racial identity or diversity for African American students. While it is very useful in

breaking down financial aid and FAFSA contributions to the cost of college it does not mention the factor of racial identity. This handbook provided no resources specifically for African American students.

The handbook from the state of Oklahoma college assistance program was the third document reviewed. It provided students with a guide that started out inquiring reflection on their reason to attend college. It can be assumed that by this reflection a student will be able to better shape what they want to be which will lead into which major they should pick at the college they ultimately choose to attend. In this section, would have been a great area to discuss the factors that contribute to college choice. It is in this section that the author could have mentioned how there are numerous variable that influence students decision making, however there wasn't any indication of the mentioned topic. There was no discussion of media images or any other contributing influences. Utilizing the college planning checklist, this guide mostly showed no evidence of information around the topic of racial identity or diversity for African American students. This handbook spends a lot of time explaining career goals and career paths, leaving no room for student identity development. Within this handbook no mention of student diversity was mentioned even though Oklahoma has an HBCU within the state. It was very shocking to see mention of resources and scholarship information for students that may be of Native American descent, but yet no mention of resources for African American students, when Oklahoma is home to Langston University an HBCU. This handbook discussed the varying types of colleges but no mention of HBCU's as an option. This handbook explained the importance of a college campus' climate but did not mention the importance of student diversity within a college campus. When reviewing this document in reference to the research question of whether these guides are able to influence college choice for African American students, I did not find strong evidence in this resource guide. There was also no evidence of discussion around the influence of media images impacting college choice decisions. This handbook did not address either research question. While this guide is helpful by providing some basic information, it is not strong enough to influence a decision solely from this source for African American students.

Jesuit's High School college planning handbook was the fourth document reviewed. This handbook lacked any reference or mention to student diversity or diversity in general. What this handbook did provide was a great timeline for students junior and mainly senior year of high school in addition to SAT and ACT testing dates. This is one of the few handbooks that provided dates for entrance testing, and mentioned military and ROTC academies. By completion of reviewing this resource guide there was no evidence found of any mentions of student diversity or racial identity. There was also no evidence or mention of contributing factors to college choice such as media images, family, peers, etc. While this handbook provided a resource for African American students it did not mention any other information for African American students. This document gave no evidence of influence for African American students. The college planning checklist proved that this guide showed no evidence of any information regarding racial identity or diversity for African American students.

Saddlebrook Prep college planning handbook was the fifth document reviewed. This handbook was the most interesting due to Saddlebrook Prep being a boarding school for tennis and golf students. However, when analyzing this document to the college planning checklist it showed no to little evidence of information regarding racial identity and diversity for African American students. It also did not provide any information or dialogue regarding media images influencing students college choice. Saddlebrook's handbook instead focused on athletes and included NCAA eligibility within their student timeline, which is not surprising considering hey

are a wealthy private sporting school. This handbook also mentioned organizations that govern student athletes. Within this handbook was also no mention of diversity or student diversity. It did mention the importance of a college campus' climate and how students should inquire about the diversity of a college. However, it did fail to explain why it's important for a campus to be diverse in the students that attend. This handbook did include a link to the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) for scholarships. Saddlebrook Prep's college handbook also provided no evidence of influence for its African American students when deciding to attend a college.

The final document reviewed was from NYC Department of Education college planning handbook. This guide was the lengthiest of all the documents reviewed and provided very in-depth information for choosing a college. This handbook was the only handbook that mentioned HBCU's. However, it was also missing the mention of racial identity and student diversity. There was great information provided on how to succeed in college and was the only handbook that covered that topic. This was the only handbook that provided resources to get through the college experience instead of just getting to it. However this handbook failed to discuss the influences that impact a student's decision. Within this handbook were stories and anecdotes from students in various differing types of colleges. In reviewing this handbook this was also the only guide that offered more evidence of influence for African American students. Using the college planning checklist this document mainly showed little evidence of information on racial identity and diversity for African American students. There was some to strong evidence of information within this document that can be catered to minority students.

In reviewing all of the documents that were to aid in college planning it was found that most of the college planning resources do not cater to African American students. Most of the documents showed no evidence of information that spoke on racial identity. None of the handbooks discussed any influence to making a decision to college, or how media images have an influence on students. The NYC College Planning Handbook was the only handbook that mentioned HBCU as a college option. These documents reviewed made little to no mention of the importance of racial identity in choosing a college. The topic of self-identity was not or vaguely mentioned, when the college experience is about discovering oneself to prepare them for the future that they want. Some of the questions mentioned in the checklist were questions that specifically asked if racial identity was mentioned within this handbook or if this handbook was geared toward African American students. Most of the handbooks were rated showing no evidence in regards to those questions.

Research (Freeman, 1999; Johnson, 2018; Gasman, 2013) discussed in this study has shown that race and racial identity are important components in college planning but yet none of these handbooks provided information on those topics. Media images have been proven (Kimble, 2017; Johnson, 2019; Williams & Palmer, 2016) to influence the college decision process, but yet this topic of influence was never addressed in any of the handbooks reviewed. While this topic is important in college planning decision making the authors of college planning documents have chosen to not address media influence, race, and racial identity in any of their resources. That reasoning is puzzling and may be explained as possibly authors not feeling race or racial identity is important in this post affirmative action, modern society even though research has proven otherwise. Even though media and currently social media is heavily impacting decision made everyday, an estimate can be made that the authors of these handbooks have not come into agreeance with the power of the media. Attending college for African Americans is a different experience that requires different planning. College planning guides have not catered to this need and do not address the issue of racial diversity on college campuses,

which could leave students with a knee jerk reaction when their college experience does not go as planned and they are faced with racial issues.

Recommendations/Implications

College planning is a complicated process that involves many layers.   For students looking to gather resources while navigating through the search process of college planning, they should consider handbooks and guides that are specific to their need. Research stated within this study, have concluded that African American students take more time when considering options for college and use varying sources of information within their search phase (Van Camp, Barden, Sloan and Clarke, 2009). Internet based college planning workbooks should include resources for HBCU's, consider racial identity and its development in students, address student diversity and college campus racial climate. Student planning resources should specify how insitutuions identify how diversity relates to their core mission across all levels of campus leadership, faculty, and outreach and recruitment of prospective students. By addressing these topics for African Americans, it can offer a much more enriched search process, that will enable students to envision a realistic view of their college experience.

High school administrations can collaboratively work with colleges and universities to create a more efficient handbook that discusses the current needs of their minority students. By creating a handbook that addresses these needs, colleges can create a pipeline with high schools and high school districts. Colleges and universities also gain the knowledge of knowing what their incoming students will need for support.

Racial identity and its development are important in college planning guides because it connects the student to their potential school. By acknowledging that college is a place for the continual development of their racial identity a student can continue their vision of themselves and how they see their place within the world. College planning resources need to address the issue of racial identity by discussing the importance of a racially diverse college campus. Racial tensions have been elevated across the country and college campuses are no exemption. There are countless articles and incidents on major college campuses that have been racially motivated and yet when reviewing a campus visit checklist the topic of racial diversity and campus climate is not a check point.

College planning resource guides should include the discussion of how media images contribute to racial identity and its importance within the college planning environment. Media images has shown to increase black college enrollment in the past (Williams, 2018; Kimble, 2017; Johnson, 2019; Williams & Palmer, 2016) and currently continues to be an influencer on how young adults view themselves and develop their racial identity (Berman,2019). When in college, students learn and continue to develop their racial identity. Racial identity should be addressed in college planning guides by asking questions such as how does the college deal with incidents of racial tension and how many students groups represent student diversity.

This capstone's purpose is to cause students to question and to look deeper into the campus environment quality which is a topic missed in the guides used for this study. College planning guides should also ask students to discuss the importance of their race and its relevance within their learning environment.   Students should consider if they feel that their race contributes or deducts from their quality of learning. This discussion speaks to the idea that during high school, students may feel culturally isolated and desire a deeper understanding for their racial identity development which can motivate them in their college choice decision making (Freeman, 1999; Freeman and Thomas, 2002). By introducing this idea in a student's

college planning process African American students can have more insight on how to find a college that will meet their academic and cultural need. Included within this work is a culturally competent resource guide that will be a checklist for campus visits. This checklist will include questions to ask while visiting a school that will aid in discovering a schools diversity. This guide should be used for students and parents so that they are both aware of the environment they plan to become a part of. *Black Excel African American Student's College Guide* is a book for purchase available online, that discusses the topic of racial identity and isolation on college campuses. It is one of very few resources that address and dissuss the topic of racial identity in college planning.

Although there is a great deal of information that should be included in a culturally competent resource guide for African American students, the accessibility of such a guide may impede implementation of the above listed recommendations. If students can ony view the materials by purchase then it limits the intended audience. However if such a resource were to be used in high schools world wide and incited conversations around media images impact on racial identity and how that contributes to students college choice, then the message will and can be received widespread as intended. Students are bombarded with a wealth of information due to the internet. How can we ensure that a guide such as this will be utilized? High schools generally provide students with information regarding specific colleges of interest or specific programs. Planning guides are often found online with no guarantee of effectiveness or use. College planning is not something that has a specific rule of implementation. It looks different for every student attending so being able to provide a universally used guide to students may be a difficult task. If colleges and universities made sure that the information they send out to students is culturally competent and diverse there will be no need for a planning guide. Possibly if this guide can be used when accessing sites like CommonApp, it can increase the accessibility.

Conclusion

       Education has always played a major role within the African American community. Despite a tumultuous past, the amount of black students attending US higher education and earning degrees are continuing to increase (Comeaux, Chapman and Contreras, 2019). HBCU's have been the sole education source for African Americans after the civil war. When the opportunity for African Americans to attend PWI's came, there was a drop-in attendance at HBCU's. Having access to more higher education choices gave African American students more options further complicating an already complex decision. The college choice process has always been a difficult decision to make. So many factors influence the decision to attend a specific college. High school experiences around race were critical to African American students' decision to attend an HBCU along with attitudes about themselves, religion, race (racial identity) and academic achievement (Matabane and Merritt, 2014; Van Camp, Barden and Sloan, 2010). Racial identity has been determined to be an important factor in how African American students make their college choice decision. However, when studying African American students decision on college choice there is limited research. From the research that was gathered and studied it did confirm racial identity as a factor but no college planning resource mentioned or discussed it. While current society is continuing to show a need for culturally competent resources for African American students, research and planning resources still continues to lag.

       Racial identity development starts within adolescence which can already be a trying time to figure out. For African American youth they have to include the task of figuring out how their culture will impact the decisions they will make for their future. This development of their racial identity is heavily impacted by the images they take in when viewing media images. Media images have come a long way from their stereotyped past and have made some great impactful influences in young adults. It is because of the media that African American youth are more aware of their environment politically and socially. This awareness has resulted in black youth to seek out more culturally relevant information and to be within environments that will support their racial identity. While HBCU's continue to struggle with inconsistent funding, the need for them to exist has remained consistent now more than ever. African American students are continuing to flock to them for their educational needs.

       This research study has concluded that when examining college planning resources there is no mention of racial identity as a factor or consideration for African American students college choice decision. In doing this study, it has been determined that there needs to be more research that is solely devoted to the study of how African American and minority students choose to attend college. The research needs to examine how their decisions are made using resources that may be gathered from their attended high school and provided from online. In practice college planning resource guides/handbooks should become more inclusive of diversity and the impact college has on different student groups. It should include the importance of a student's racial identity and how that impacts their decision making. College planning is a multi-layered process that can vary from person to person and the resources available to aid in this decision should reflect the diversity of its students.

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Appendix A: College Handbook Evaluations

College Handbook 1- California students and their families college readiness workbook

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college	X				
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option	X				
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students		X			
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	X				
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students	X				
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students	X				
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate	X				

College Handbook 2- College Planning 101

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college		X			
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option	X				

	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students		X			
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	X				
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students	X				
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students	X				
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate				X	

College Handbook 3- 2019-2020 High School Student Workbook

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college	X				
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option	X				
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students		X			
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	X				
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students	X				
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students	X				
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate		X			

College Handbook 4- Jesuit High School College Planning Handbook

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college	X				
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option	X				
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students	X				
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	X				
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students		X			
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students	X				
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate	X				

College Handbook 5- Saddlebrook Prep College Planning Handbook 2017-2018

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college	X				
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option	X				
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students		X			

	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	X				
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students	X				
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students	X				
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate		X			

College Handbook 6- New York City Department of Education College Planning Handbook

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college	X				
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option					X
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students		X			
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	X				
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students		X			
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students		X			
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate			X		

Total Tabulations of College Handbook Tallies

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence	Total
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college	5	1				6
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option	5				1	6
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students	1	5				6
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor	6					6
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students	4	2				6
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students	5	1				6
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate	2	2	1	1		6

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS'
QUICK GUIDE
TO
COLLEGE PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

College can be an exciting time in a young adult's life. It is a time of exploration and life discovery and also a time to prepare for the rest of your life. College is also a time to learn who you are as you further develop your racial identity. The decision to attend college has always been a major life event that comes with much responsibility and expectations. But how do you prepare yourself for this great task ahead? What are some things to consider about yourself that will help you choose the right school for you? This guide will help African American students who are within the search process of their college planning. It is a guide of recommended steps and resources that can be used at any point before or after decision day. This guide is to be used with other sources of information that will contribute to a college decision.

COLLEGE PLANNING

The college planning process for African American students can be a very exciting yet overwhelming process. There are so many things to consider when trying to create a plan to choose the college of your dreams. With choices that range from technical and trade college to a four-year university, the choices are limitless. There are many factors that need to be considered when choosing a school. These factors are not all based on academics but how a college experience will contribute to your identity development. African American students have to consider making a college choice through a culturally competent lens. Education is not just about the knowledge acquired within a school building but how the African American culture can continue to excel through higher education.

But how can you narrow down the numerous options and choose a school that will satisfy all your needs?

The first step is to reflect on your reason for wanting to go to college. Are you going to college to get a good job? Or are you going because college is important to your culture? Or are you going to college to live in a different environment? Were you influenced to go to college because of your favorite TV show or movie that was filmed on a college campus? Whatever your reason is for wanting to go to college the first step is to acknowledge it and consider the realities of if it does or not fit your expectations.

Reflection: Why am I going to College……

Thinking about who you are reflectively is an important step within the college planning process. In this step you will think about how you identify racially and/or culturally.

        Does your culture contribute to who you are ?

        What helped shaped my racial identity? Media, peers, family, etc….?

        How does your racial identity fit within your educational goals and settings?

        Has your education thus far contributed to your racial identity?

        How important is learning about your culture in an educational setting?

After reflecting on who you are and how your culture impacts your self-development, it is now time to collaborate with family, counselors and teachers to explore the types of schooling available for who you are.

Upon exploring the school type that is suitable for your needs, it is best to start reaching out to the varying schools and gather information. This information should include cost of tuition, financial aid, expenses and entrance requirements (SAT, ACT). It is through this collaboration of ideas and information that a thorough review can be made when choosing a college.

Campus Visit

When it is time to visit a campus and meet with advisors and other representatives of the college it is very important to have a set of prepared questions to be answered. This ensures that the college you are visiting is right for you and has the qualities you are looking for and not just something that is sold to you because of good marketing techniques and pretty landscaping. Visiting a college campus is the time to speak with students that are actually attending your potential school and can give first-hand accounts for questions and issues not found in a manual or guide.

Campus Visit Checklist

Question	Comment
How/Have this school dealt with issues of racism on campus recently?	
How many student diversity groups are there?	
What is the racial climate on this school campus? Is it hostile, blended, encouraging, etc.…?	
What kind of classes/majors are centered around education of other cultures?	
What scholarship opportunities are for African American students?	
What resources are available at this school for African American students?	

Decision Time

When making a final decision on which college to attend African American students need to consider more than just academics. Students need to consider all the information, influences, expectations and media images that may impact their decision. The college chosen needs to be able to relate and nurture their racial identity. African American students need to feel comfortable within a college that will help them develop and find themselves while learning and preparing for their career. Reviewing all information that was gathered for each choice of school and determining which school offers the best opportunity and environment for you can help in decision making.

Now that a decision has been made the hard part is not over but just beginning. There are many resources that students can use when helping them get through college. Take advantage of resources that are available on your campus and remember to always ask for help. This quick guide lists resources that may be of assistance in college planning or college information.

Resource List

College Planning Resources

https://www.commonapp.org/

https://commonblackcollegeapp.com/

https://www.collegeboard.org/

https://www.livecareer.com/resources/careers/planning/college-admissions

https://www.livecareer.com/resources/careers/planning/teen-college

https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/college-planning-guide/

College Types

https://blackoutcoalition.org/hbcu-map/?fbclid=IwAR2vh2_Am8UBCNJ1XKYX_P4TCLu8JhL4upkGQ5hPyyah-VtjRIKyNui1CV4

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search

https://www.collegedata.com/

https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/

https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/hbcu

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https://www.slideshare.net/TammyCarter7/types-of-colleges-and-universities

https://crestresearch.ac.uk/comment/measuring-decision-making/

Checklist for The African American Students' Quick Guide to College Planning

Topic Description	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence	Very Strong Evidence
How does this handbook mention the importance of racial identity when choosing a college					X
How does this handbook mention HBCU's as an option					X
How does the handbook address cultural differences in the recruitment of prospective students			X		
How does this handbook discuss racial identity as a college choice factor				X	
How does this handbook include culturally competent resources and support services for students					X
How well is this handbook geared toward African American Students					X
How does this handbook frame the importance of campus climate				X	