

ABSTRACT

JACKSON, JAMES ALFRED. All-Male Early College Completers, The First Step: Choosing to Participate in an Early College. (Under the direction of Dr. James Bartlett).

Early colleges are not new. They have been around officially since at least 2002.

However, this early college is unique because it is all-male and the way the participants attending high school and college classes during their freshman and sophomore years are different than other early colleges. So, how will this unique early college compare to the hundreds of other early colleges? Will this early college experience the same rates of success that the literature touts regarding the early college field in general? Currently, it does not compare in areas such as percentage of graduates or number of enrollees. Those aspects of the early college are not a part of this study.

This study sought to begin with the decision of choosing to participate in a new all-male early college. The study asked graduates from the first two cohorts of the early college what were the highest and lowest rated factors that influenced their decision to participate in this all-male early college. The study uses the theory of planned behavior as its conceptual framework and Q-methodology to gauge the participants' perspectives of the influencing factors. Ten early college graduates participated in the study. The results indicated that these successful graduates aligned under two themes: one hailed getting an education as its main influence while the other's main influence was having the support of family and friends.

The understanding acquired from this study will enhance the early college stakeholders' recruiting, operating, communication systems, and processes which could consequently impact current and future middle school, high school, early college, and college students.

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All-Male Early College Completers, The First Step: Choosing to Participate in an Early College

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work and journey to my God because I could not have made it through this without Them – to God The Father for making me, to God The Son for saving me and interceding for me, and to God The Holy Spirit for living with me and guiding me daily. I dedicate this work to the wonderful woman God fashioned just for me almost sixty years ago and put into my life almost forty years ago, my queen, Mary Ellen Jackson. Babe, your love and support through this journey has been so instrumental in making this happen. Thank you; we made it.

BIOGRAPHY

James A. Jackson, the son of Margaret and James A. Jackson, Sr., grew up in Gray Court, South Carolina. James Jr. is a graduate of Laurens District 55 High School in Laurens, South Carolina. After high school, he joined the United States Army and served 24 life-fulfilling years in defense of his country. After retirement from active military service, James and his wife, Mary Ellen, returned to South Carolina to settle down.

In 2000, James accepted a position at Spartanburg Community College, which at that time was Spartanburg Technical College, where he began completing his higher education goals. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Development from Limestone College in 2006 at age 48. He earned his Master of Arts in Human Resource Development from Clemson University in 2008 at age 50. He began his journey toward a Doctor of Education Degree in Adult and Community College Education from North Carolina State University in 2009 at age 51. And, he is now coming to the end of that quest at 60 years of age.

The ages were added to this life story for those who may need a nudge and, hopefully, to encourage someone who may need to see that you are never too old to start and never too old to complete the mission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The truth be told, I began this journey toward a doctoral degree kicking and screaming and in complete denial. I had no intention of pursuing a doctorate after I completed my Master's. I remember people at Spartanburg Community College asking me about pursuing my doctorate and encouraging me to do so. At that time, I was 51 years old. I thought that I would probably only work another 10-12 years; so, I would not be around long enough to seek opportunities to become a college president or even vice-president, nor did I know if I even wanted either of those positions. I would never recoup financially or in time and effort what this degree was going to cost me. I had all the reasons why this was not in my future, as they say "down pat." But, one Saturday afternoon while standing in our bedroom, with my wife sitting on our bed and listening patiently to me rant about why this was not happening, a voice, as clear and as strong as if it was right there in the room, said to me, "Are you done?" I made some small gesture, as if to say, "No I'm not done." And, again, it said, "Ok, are you done?" I stopped and acknowledged, "I guess so, if you say so." Then, the voice said, "It is not for you." I smiled, and my wife asked, "What did He say?" I said, "I guess I'm going to get a Doctorate!" We both laughed, she more hardily than I, of course. But, that's how I got here.

There have been a lot of people who have helped me along the way, and, I know I will not and cannot give them all their due. So, forgive me if I don't mention you; it has been a long journey, and there have been many supporting hands. I thank you all. But, again, I want to first acknowledge God for making all of this possible. I thank my wife, Mary Ellen, for taking this journey with me. I thank James Sr. and Margaret Jackson for helping to mold me into the man I am today. I thank my sisters, Eleaise and Leonia, for their support, prayers, and belief in me. I thank my sons, Rodney and Brandon, for checking on me and helping me to stay focused; I am

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In 2011, representatives of a school district in an urban upstate county in the southeast approached the local community college with the idea of establishing an early-college. This was not an unusual idea since there are plenty of early colleges across the nation. According to figures generated by Jobs for the Future, the organization and its partners have created or redesigned at least 280 early colleges in thirty-eight states (Webb & Gerwin, 2014). The early colleges referenced by Jobs for the Future are the early colleges the organization helped to develop or early colleges registered with them. Still, there are far more such colleges, much like the early college that is part of this study; however, what makes this one unusual is the fact that this early college is all male. The researcher found no reference to all-male early colleges or all-male early college students during the literature search, although there is an all-male middle college at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), the result of a collaboration between Guilford County Schools and NC A&T. The other unusual characteristic of this early college is that the freshman and sophomore participants attend classes at their original co-ed high school with co-ed non-early-college high school students, and some early-college high school students during the first half of the school day, and attend classes at the all-male early college, located on the college campus, during the second half of the school day. According to the literature, early colleges are small independent schools usually located on a college campus that provide concurrent high school and college level education (Edmunds et al., 2017).

Will this version of the early college live up to the early college successes noted in the literature? For example, Jobs For The Future reports authored by Webb & Gerwin (2014, p.1)

and Hooker (2017, p.4) note that: (1) 90 percent of early college students graduate high school, while the national average is 78 percent; (2) 30 percent of the graduates leave high school with their high school diploma and an Associate's degree or other postsecondary credential; (3) early college graduates are more likely to persist and earn a higher education degree within one or two years than those who did not attend an early college. Where does this early college fall into the single-gender education sphere? These are secondary education students in a post-secondary education environment. The literature regarding male single-gender education on a secondary level offers no consensus to answer the appropriateness and validity debate. Favorable male single-gender education literature includes studies like that of Park, Behrman, & Choi (2012) who noted that graduates of all-male high schools performed better and were significantly more likely to attend a four-year college compared to male graduates of co-ed schools. Not so favorable male single-gender education literature consists of studies such as that of LePore & Warren (1997) who noted that there was little, if any, difference in the test scores of boys attending single-sex schools and those attending coeducational schools. There is always the argument that "Separate is not equal," said the Supreme Court in 1954. While single-gender education at the college level has recorded no such debates, there are several prestigious single-gender institutions of higher education: for example, the all-female colleges, Barnard College in New York, Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, Mills College in California, and Spelman College in Georgia, and, the all-male colleges Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, Morehouse College in Georgia, and Wabash College in Indiana (James, 2017; Riley, 2017). What impact does attending coed classes with non-early college and early college high school students at the students' traditional high school for half of the school day and, attending classes with their all-male counterparts at the all-male early college during the second half of the school day have on the participating students' perspective of the early college, their persistence, or ultimately their success? However, before they can achieve

ultimate success (completion/graduation) or even persist from one semester to another, they must first choose to participate. What are the factors that influenced their decision to participate in this early-college?

Problem Statement

Although there is an all-male middle college associated with North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), this researcher found no studies focused on all-male early college high school (ECHS) programs. This researcher could find no research focused on the perceptions of male earlier college students. The prevailing studies around early colleges have tended to focus on how ECHS students performed academically compared to students attending traditional high schools in areas such as graduation, GPA, attendance, and dropout rates. In addition, no early colleges in the literature claim to have split locations. The all-male early college that is part of this study requires its freshmen and sophomores to attend classes at the traditional high school in a co-ed environment for the first half of each school day and then participate in ECHS activities in an all-male environment on a community college campus during the second half of the school day.

There is no literature focused on all-male early colleges; and, there is little, if any, literature which addresses the perspective of males in an early-college environment. Few studies are based on the perspective of the students, in general. What better way to identify what is working, or in this case, what about the early college environment appeals to the students, impacts their persistence, and factors into their success, than to ask the students?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that influenced the decisions of all-male early college completers to participate in the program. Specifically, the study's group of all-male

early-college participants were asked to consider their decision to get involved with this program and to identify the reasons and factors that influenced that decision. This study will, hopefully, be the first step in identifying, from the students' perspectives, factors that contribute to their success and persistence. This study is the beginning. It is step one, answering why they chose to participate.

Research Question

What are the highest and lowest rated factors that influenced the all-male early college participants of the 2013 cohort (graduating class of 2017) and the all-male early college participants of the 2014 cohort (graduating class of 2018) to participate in this early college?

Related Theories

This study was designed to find out why these young men made the decision to participate in the early college. There are a number of “decision-making theories” in the literature: for example, optimal decision-making theory, ethical decision-making theory, humble decision-making theory, and group decision-making theory, to name a few. However, none of these theories are addressed in this study. Decision-making theories are relevant in areas such as pediatrics, risk assessment, consumers affairs, business, finance, neuroscience, and much more. There are a variety of factors that influence an individual's choice(s). Factors, including but not limited to, past experiences, personal beliefs, peer influences, prior knowledge, assumptions, cognitive biases, cultural impact, the risks involved, and one's values (Dietrich, 2010; Bruine de Bruin, Del Missier, & Levin, 2012; Fischhoff, 2008; Gutnik, Hakimzada, Yoskowitz, & Patel, 2006) can all play a role in one's decision-making process. The decision-making theories relevant to this study, rational choice theory (RCT), classical decision theory (CDT), behavioral

decision theory (BDT), and the theory of reasoned action (TRA), are addressed after a brief explanation of the decision-making process.

Decision-making process. Decision-making is something everyone does, every day. From determining what to eat for breakfast in the morning to what time to go to bed at night and every decision made in between, decision-making is a part of living. So, why do people make the decisions they make? Are they due to past experiences, what one knows, a commitment to the perceived outcome, individual differences, or one's beliefs? According to Oliveira (2007), the primary characteristics of decision-making are decision and behavior. Oliveira (2007) stated that decision-making involves "the process of human thought and reaction about the external world, which include the past and possible future events and the psychological consequences, to the decision maker, of those events" (p. 12). Oliveira (2007) makes the observation that decision-making "seems to integrate both the beliefs about specific events and people's subjective reactions to those events" (p. 12). Decision-making research attempts to answer the question, why do people in the same situation, with the same options, make different choices? There are many decision-making processes and theories, three of which are related to this research.

Rational choice theory. One would think that rational choice theory could be easily explained because it appears to note that a person's choice/decision is based on what is rational or rational reasoning. Rational choice theory (RCT) is a family of theories with many versions (Boudon, 2009; Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997; Hedstrom & Ylikoski, 2014), which, according to Hechter & Kanazawa (1997), is not concerned with individual outcomes but social outcomes. Boudon (2009) determined that RCT has three underlying principles and six proposes, which follow.

Underlying principles:

1. Explaining a social phenomenon means making it the consequence of a set of statements which should all be easily acceptable.
2. A good sociological theory is a theory that interprets any social phenomenon as the outcome of individual actions.
3. Actions should be analyzed as “rational.” (p. 179)

Proposes (postulates):

1. Any social phenomenon is the effect of individual decisions, actions, attitudes, and so forth (the principle of methodological individualism).
2. An action can be understood at least in principle (the principle of Verstehen or understanding).
3. Any action is caused by reasons in the mind of individuals (rationality).
4. These reasons derive from the consideration by the actor of the consequences of his action as he sees them (consequentialism or instrumentalism).
5. Actors are concerned mainly with the consequences for themselves of their actions (egoism).
6. Actors are able to distinguish the costs and benefits of alternative lines of action and choose the line of action with the most favorable balance (maximization or optimization). (p. 180)

In short, in RCT, decision makers analyze a number of possible courses of action and choose the course of action that presents the optimal result(s). The issue with RCT is that although there are many examples of its effectiveness in explaining a variety of social phenomena, even before it became a recognized theory, it can also appear powerless in

explaining a variety of social phenomena (Boudon, 2003, 2009). For example, with the act of voting, according to RCT, people should refrain from voting since the costs of voting are not zero. Thus, it can't explain why people vote. It appears that RCT has a problem accounting for any behavior involving beliefs or values (Boudon, 2003, 2009; Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997).

Classical decision theory. Classical Decision Theory (CDT) is the process of making a decision using a course of action selected from a fixed set of alternatives with a specific outcome in mind (Gutnik et al., 2006). There are three components to a decision: (1) courses of action (options); (2) belief that the course of action will achieve the goal; and (3) the expected outcome (positive or negative) (Gutnik et al., 2006; Oliveira, 2007). "The aim in making a decision is to maximize the gains, or expected value of the outcome, and use information in a way that would accomplish this goal" (Gutnik et al., 2006, p. 721). The information related to the courses of action, beliefs, and expected outcomes comes from a variety of sources, including past experiences, personal beliefs, peer influences, prior knowledge, assumptions, cognitive biases, cultural impact, the risks involved, and one's values. One of the issues with CDT according to Gutnik et al. (2006), is that it "failed to explain behavior and decision-making in practical, real world situations [and that it's] limited in descriptive power because it treats all decisions as the same comparing them to a normative standard" (p. 721).

Normative processes identify the expected impact on the possible choices (the norm). Normative theories attempt to "indicate how decision makers should decide" (Oliveira, 2007, p. 12). "Descriptive models use cognition to explain decision making" (Oliveira, 2007, p. 12) and categorize how individuals view the decision in terms of being comparable to the norm.

Behavioral decision theory. Like classic decision theory (CDT), behavioral decision theory (BDT) has both normative and descriptive components. The normative component "is

concerned with prescribing courses of action that conform most closely to the decision maker's beliefs and values. Describing these beliefs and values and the manner in which individuals incorporate them into their decisions is the aim of the descriptive component" (Slovic, Fischhoff, & Lichtenstein, 1977, p. 1).

Behavioral Decision Theory (BDT) is the process of making decisions trying to attain a satisfactory outcome which may not be or may not have been determined to be the optimal outcome. BDT "looks for generalizations of behavior related to the task performed and the decision context in which the task occurs" (Huber & Payne, 2011, p. 373). Howard & Janvier (2015) state that "behavioral decision theory provides insight into how people make choices under conditions of uncertainty" (p. 340). Davis-Sramek, Thomas, & Fugate (2018) suggest that the "theoretical understanding offered by BDT informs how selection decisions can be influenced, framed, or processed for desired outcomes" (p. 94). Behavioral researchers study how decisions are made often focusing on surprising behavioral effects that typically build off of deviations from normative standards (Bruine de Bruin, Fischhoff, & Parker, 2007; Huber & Payne, 2011).

Davis-Sramek et al. (2018) maintain that BDT is an informational processing approach to decision making. Per Davis-Sramek et al. (2018) and Takemura (2014), decision makers' capacity to process information is limited, and due to those limitations, decision makers use a variety of information processing strategies. It is believed that decision makers selectively use the available information along with their own related memories to make spontaneous choices. Because the decision maker is looking for a satisfactory outcome, not the optimal outcome, trade-offs are sometimes necessary; and, preferences in decision-making may be formed. Davis-Sramek et al., (2018) postulated that decision makers (1) "process information selectively, with

attention given to the most [relevant factor] among a choice of options,” (2) “tend to form preferences about issues that are familiar and directly experienced,” and (3) “decisions are often evaluated, either by others to whom one is accountable or by oneself, so decision makers must often be able to justify and provide reasons for a decision” (p. 89).

In an article addressing the decision-making competence of adolescents, Fischhoff (2008) determined that behavior decision research was the appropriate approach to guide his assessment. He states his reason for using behavioral decision research was because it “provides analytical and empirical procedures for clarifying the challenges that young people face and their success in addressing them” (Fischhoff, 2008, p. 12). In addition to all that has been noted about behavioral decision-making theory above, Fischhoff notes that along with BDTs normative and descriptive components, or what he terms as normative analysis and descriptive study, there is a third related component, prescriptive intervention which he states helps people bridge critical gaps in their understanding. Fischhoff (2008) also mentions social norms as a perspective of normative analysis and states:

Social norms are among the things that people might value. A rational choice might reflect just social norms, if people care solely about what other people value. A rational choice might also let social norms be overridden by other concerns or balance conflicting social norms (e.g., those of peers and parents). (p.13)

Fischhoff believes that being able to assess the decision-making competence of adolescents’ (teens’) is imperative for our society. They are the future and, if their competence is overestimated, they may be left to face choices too difficult for them; and, if their competence is underestimated, they may be kept from exercising justified independence.

Theory of reasoned action. The theory of reasoned action (TRA) suggests that when one chooses to perform a behavior, it is directly influenced by the intention to perform that behavior (behavioral intention). The intention to perform the behavior is a function of relevant information or belief that performing the behavior is likely to lead to a specific outcome. Behavioral intentions are the result of both attitudes toward performing the behavior and subjective norms about performing the behavior. Attitudes are influenced by the individual's beliefs about the outcome(s) of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs), and the subjective norms are influenced by whether someone, who is held in high regard, approves or disapproves of performing the behavior (normative beliefs), (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992; Hale, Householder, & Greene, 2002; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008). Vallerand, Pelletier, Deshaies, Cuerrier, & Mongeau (1992) credited Ajzen & Fishbein's 1980 work, stating "the relative importance of the attitudinal and normative components in determining intention is expected to vary according to the behavior, the situation, and individual differences of the actor" (p. 98).

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) posits that behavioral intention is the most important direct factor of behavior. The key to this theory explaining or predicting behavior depends on one having a large degree of control over the behavior (volitional control), (Doll & Ajzen, 1992; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008). To account for factors outside of one's control that can possibly affect intentions and behaviors, Ajzen and colleagues added perceived behavioral control to the theory of reasoned action. This addition created the theory of planned behavior.

Conceptual Framework

Theory of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior, developed by Ajzen, is noted by Ajzen (2002) to have "emerged as one of the most influential and popular conceptual frameworks for the study of human action," (p. 665). The theory was designed to help explain

and even predict human behavior in particular circumstances (Ajzen, 1991). The basic premise of the theory is that a person’s behavior is determined by her or his intention to perform the behavior. The theory also posits that attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are predictive of the intention (Ajzen, 1991). Figure 1.1 is a graphic representation of Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior. A full account of the theory of planned behavior can be found in Chapter 2, Literature Review.

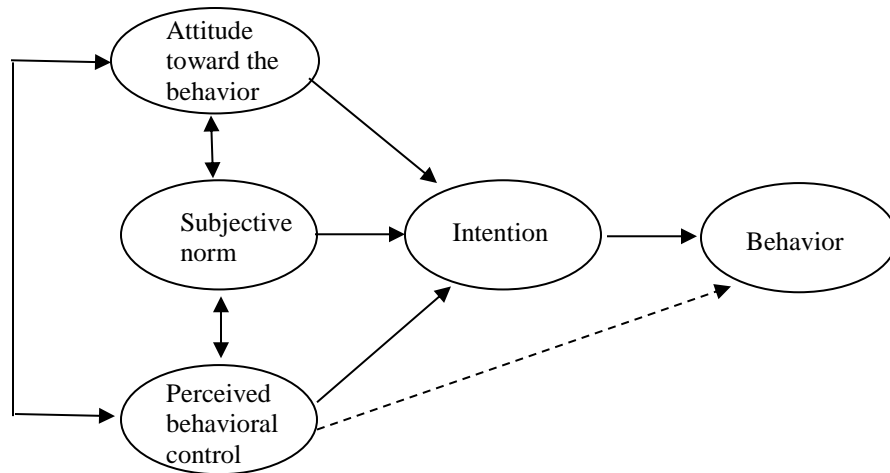


Figure 1.1. “Theory of planned behavior,” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182).

Q Methodology was used to gauge select all-male, early-college participants’ perspectives of the reasons/factors that impacted their choices to participate in this early college. The theory of planned behavior is a generalized theory that has been used in a variety of studies, settings, and areas of research. Based on the theory of planned behavior, the sort statements address the behavioral, normative, and control aspects of the participants’ decision making. Thus, in this study, the participants were asked to identify statements that are most representative of the reasons, or that had the most impact on their decisions to participate in the all-male early college; the least representative of the reasons, or that had the least impact on their decisions to participate in the all-male early college; or that were neutral to their decisions to participate in

the all-male early college. They were also asked to explain their most and least representative reasons.

Definitions of Terms

Community/technical college. “Any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 5).

Early college high school. Early College High Schools (ECHS) are small often independent (self-directed or self-governing) high schools usually located on a college campus that provide high school and college level education to underrepresent/underprepared students with the goal of making available to them the opportunity to acquire up to 2 years of college credit upon graduation from high school (Edmunds et al., 2010). Note: In this document, Early college high school (ECHS) and early college (EC) are used interchangeably.

Peer. For the purpose of this study peers are other high school students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the all-male early college and the uniqueness of its structure. The lack of literature relevant to this phenomenon was addressed as part of the problem statement. The purpose of the study and the research question for the study were displayed. Theories related to this area of research have been noted, and the conceptual framework for the study was unveiled. A few terms were also defined.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature related to this study. Although the researcher found no literature addressing an all-male early college, the existing literature regarding early college is reviewed. Literature regarding the theory of planned behavior is explored. Since this early college is all-male, the literature around single-gender education is examined. To help determine the impact peers may have on young men's decisions, the peer influence literature is reviewed. The community college is explained, and a summary concludes the chapter.

Early College High School

Early college high schools (ECHS) are small, independent (self-directed or self-governing) schools designed to increase the number of students who graduate from high school and are prepared for postsecondary education. Unlike dual credit/enrollment or advanced placement (AP) programs in high school which tend to cater to the advanced or college bound students, the students attending or selected to attend ECHSs are usually those who are underrepresented in college (Hoffman, 2003). McGlynn (2011) notes that the Early College High School Initiative "was begun to help address one of our nations' greatest and vitally important challenges, that is, raising college completion rates for the underserved" (p. 22). Traditionally, the underserved student is characterized as low-income, first-generation college goer, English language learner, and minority. Early College High Schools bring together high school and college in a demanding, supportive program, compressing the time it takes to complete a high school diploma, providing students with the opportunity to obtain up to 2 years of college credit upon graduation from high school, and it is tuition free (DiMaria, 2013; Jobs for the Future [JFF], 2009; Webb & Mayka, 2011). They are usually located on a college campus

which often helps students identify with being college-goers (Edmunds et al., 2010; McGlynn, 2011).

According to Born (2006) and Vargas & Miller (2011) the first early college was established in 2002 when a Middle College High School, which was established in 1974 at LaGuardia Community College in New York City, partnered with International High School and become an early college. During the same year, Los Angeles Harbor Community College housed an early college program called Harbor Teachers Preparation Academy. Bard High School Early College and, in some respects, Simon's Rock College, also lay claim to being the first. Marcy (2006), when speaking about the early college phenomena, notes that the idea of the early college is not new – just renewed. To make her case she says, “for years students have entered college before the age of 18, and in 1964 Simon's Rock College of Bard became the nation's first residential college devoted solely to the younger scholar” (p. B16). After their success with providing highly motivated tenth and eleventh grade students the opportunity to attend Simon's Rock College, Bard ventured to address the ills of the traditional public high school by creating the Bard High School Early College (BHSEC), which opened fall 2001, (Botstein, 2003). According to Botstein (2003), the BHSEC program offered a four-year general education curriculum that culminated in a high school diploma and an associate in arts degree in liberal arts and science, tuition free.

In 2002, the Middle College National Consortium (MCNC), which was formed in 1993, launched its Early College Initiative. The initiative, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, along with the Bill and Melinda Gates, Ford, and Kellogg Foundations, supported the redesigning of existing middle colleges and the opening of new early colleges across the nation,

and continues to support those early colleges established under the initiative today (Born, 2006; McGlynn, 2011; Middle College National Consortium website, n.d.).

Jobs for the Future (JFF) is “a national initiative that develops policy solutions and new pathways from college readiness to career advancement, helps America’s neediest high school students get a college education quickly and inexpensively,” was charged with administering the ECHS Initiative in 2002, and it continues to do so (Le & Frankfort, 2011). According to the JFF, ‘early college high schools blend high school and college in a rigorous yet supportive program, compressing the time it takes to complete a high school diploma and the first two years of college,’ (Le & Frankfort, 2011, p. iii).

In April 2009, Jobs for the Future published the “Early College High School Initiative Core Principles.” These are five core principles to which all early college high schools adhere. The principles are as follows:

Core Principle 1: Early college schools are committed to serving students underrepresented in higher education.

- Early college schools recruit low-income students, racial and ethnic minorities, first generation college goers, and English language learners.
- Early college schools recruit students at risk of dropping out of high school, not matriculating to college, and not completing a degree (i.e., students with poor attendance, struggling learners, students who are overage and under-credited.)
- Student admission is not based solely on prior academic performance.

Core Principle 2: Early college schools are created and sustained by a local education agency, a higher education institution, and the community, all of whom are jointly accountable for student success.

- A formal, written agreement provides for full access to college courses, facilities, and support services.
- Dedicated representatives from all partner organizations meet regularly to review data, provide guidance, and make key decisions regarding planning, implementation, and sustaining the early college school.
- Faculty, staff, and community partners develop deep collaborations and participate, according to their role, in data-driven activities that advance instructional practices, curriculum development, staff development, and student support in order to build a college-going culture.
- All partners are actively engaged in developing sustainable funding for the early college school.

Core Principle 3: Early college schools and their higher education partners and community jointly develop an integrated academic program so all students earn one to two years of transferable college credit leading to college completion.

- Secondary and higher education partners have aligned high school and college requirements and curricula, and they co-develop an academic plan that incorporates opportunities for dual credit.
- The academic plan ensures that students strive for two years and complete a minimum of one year of college credit in the core disciplines.

- There are strategies and structures in place that provide students with the opportunity to complete four-year degrees (e.g., a graduation plan, transfer or articulation agreements).

Core Principles 4: Early college schools engage all students in a comprehensive support system that develops academic and social skills as well as the behaviors and conditions necessary for college completion.

- Early college schools develop and implement a proactive support plan that includes multiple academic and social supports to ensure students' progression through college, articulates how and where services are delivered, and clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of staff and partners in their implementation.
- Early college schools address barriers to students' learning and academic achievement inside and outside of school.

Core Principle 5: Early college schools and their higher education and community partners work with intermediaries to create conditions and advocate for supportive policies that advance the early college movement.

- Early college schools collect and share data with initiative partners to help demonstrate effectiveness at the local, state, and national levels.
- Early college schools work with their intermediaries to develop communications plans that further the objectives of the movement.
- Early college schools and their intermediaries work collectively to influence state and national policy, including legislation, regulations, and the allocations of funds.

- Early colleges, with their partners, are involved in preparing teachers and leaders to effectively meet the unique mission of the early college movement.

(JFF, 2009)

To tout the success of the Early College Initiative, Webb & Mayka (2011) reported that there were 230 early college schools serving more than 50,000 students in 28 states. Then, focusing on the 2007, 2008, and 2009 four-year graduating cohorts of early college high school programs that were four or more years old, they found:

- Almost all early college graduates earn some college credits.
- In 2009, 24 percent of graduates who were enrolled in their early college school for four years earned an associate's degree or two years of college credit. Forty-four percent earned at least a year of college credit.
- During the 2009 school year, 70 percent of the students enrolled in early college schools were students of color, and 59 percent were classified as eligible for free and reduced lunch. Nearly half will be the first in their family to attend college.
- Nearly three-fourths of early college schools partner with two-year colleges; the others partner with four-year institutions. Several schools partner with both.
- A substantial number of college courses taken by early college graduates were in core academic areas. Fine-grained data were available for 24 schools. At the vast majority of these schools, graduates took an average of more than one-fifth of their college classes from among the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and English.
- 73 percent of all early college four-year cohort graduates for which National Student Clearinghouse data were available enrolled in college the next year. This

compares favorably to U.S. government estimates of the proportion of recent high school graduates enrolled in college, which range from 63 to 69 percent. What makes the enrollment figures especially noteworthy is that most early college students are from groups with even lower national college going rates. (Webb & Mayka, 2011, p. iv)

The Early College literature is full of examples of the benefits of participating in an early college. In addition, the results of a study by Edmunds et al. (2017) suggests that students participating in an early college tend to be college ready and that college faculty view them favorably regarding being prepared “even though they may be younger and have had fewer life experiences than traditional college students” (p. 137).

While many of the numbers and testimonies show the positive impact early colleges have had on many students, Alaie (2010) addresses how the impact of attending early college for some students may not be a positive experience. Alaie (2010) notes that an early college student’s academic poor performance or course failure may potentially be educationally counterproductive, impair future academic performance, reinforce ideas of intellectual inadequacy, or may threaten the individual’s self-esteem. She also notes that even if the student earns her or his high school diploma and enters college, her or his academic interest or drive may be damaged.

Early College High Schools appear to have altered the academic and employment futures of the traditionally underserved in higher education (the low-income, first-generation college goers, students of color, and English language learners) who have the opportunity to participate in the program.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior was designed to help explain and even predict human behavior in particular circumstances (Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (1991) the theory of planned behavior is an extension of the theory of reasoned action, noting that the theory of reasoned action was limited “in dealing with behaviors over which people have incomplete volitional control” (p. 181). He goes on to state that like the original theory of reasoned action, “a central factor in the theory of planned behavior is the individual’s intention to perform a given behavior” (p. 181). And, it is assumed that intentions encapsulate the motivations that influence a behavior, thus, indicating how much effort one is willing to or planning to put forth to perform the behavior. Ajzen (1991) notes that, generally, the stronger one feels toward engaging in a behavior, the better the likelihood she/he will perform that behavior. However, this is only the case if the individual can decide at will to perform or not perform the behavior (volitional control).

Having actual control (control over the resources and opportunity) (Ajzen, 1991) to decide to perform or not perform a behavior is the ultimate situation. But, what if one does not have control (resources and opportunities) to perform the behavior? What is one’s level of perceived behavioral control? According to Ajzen (1991), the perception of behavioral control and its impact on intention and action is of greater interest than having actual control.

The theory of planned behavior is a generalized theory which has been used to study a wide range of individual behaviors in a variety of fields (i.e., substance abuse treatment, choice of travel, hunting intentions, environmental behaviors, health and fitness, and many others). In the theory of planned behavior, intention, in short, is one’s motivation to perform a certain behavior. Intention can guide or predict behavior. Behavior is action.

The theory of planned behavior submits that intention is determined by three conceptually independent constructs: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude toward the behavior refers to one's favorable or unfavorable assessment of the behavior in question. The more positive the attitude, the stronger the intention to engage in the behavior. Subjective norm, refers to the social pressure one perceives to have encountered from individuals who are important to her/him (important others) in reference to performing or not performing the behavior. The stronger the perceived social pressure, the greater the intention to perform the behavior in question. "Perceived behavioral control refers to one's perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). The greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger the intention to perform a given behavior. The theory also proposes that a person who intends to perform a behavior may lack the control (resources and opportunities) to do so; therefore, perceived behavioral control can directly influence behavior, see Figure 2.1.

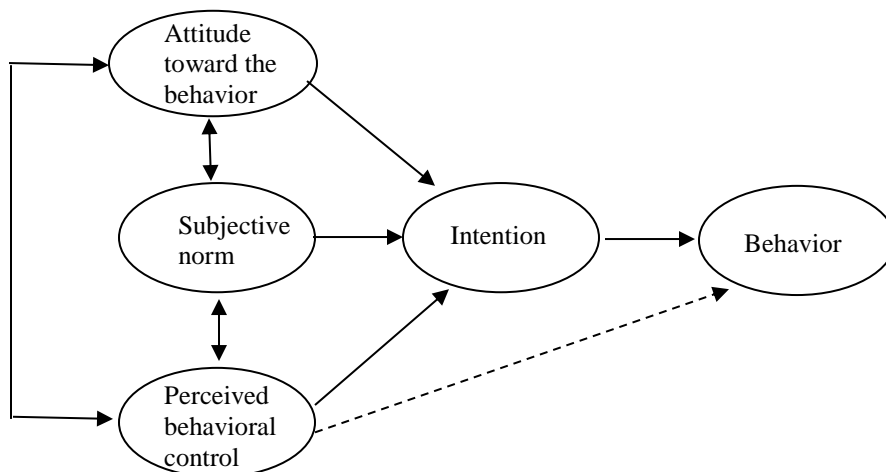


Figure 2.1. "Theory of planned behavior," (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182).

The theory of planned behavior intends to not only predict human behavior but also explain it. To do so, the theory considers the preceding beliefs or predecessors that impact each behavior. The predecessors are the relevant beliefs, and they are considered to be the prevailing determinants of an individual’s intentions and actions (Ajzen, 1991). The three prominent beliefs are “behavioral beliefs which are assumed to influence attitude toward behavior, normative beliefs which constitute the underlying determinants of subjective norm, and control beliefs which provide the basis for perceptions of behavioral control” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Figure 2.2 is a graphic representation of Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior with preceding beliefs.

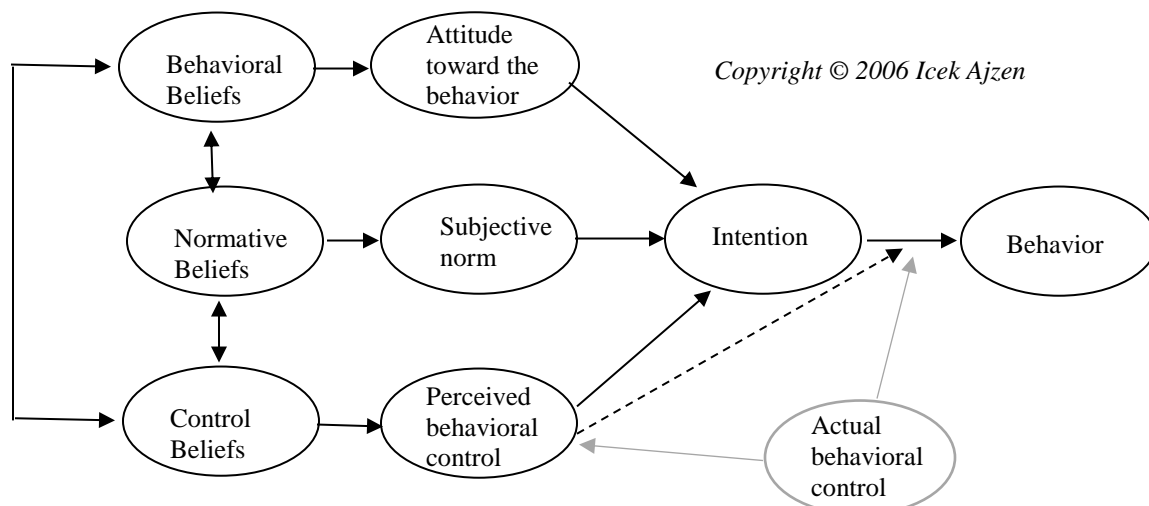


Figure 2.2. “Theory of planned behavior,” (Ajzen, 2010, p.1).

Single-Gender Education

Educational reform often finds itself repeating the things of the past, and single-gender education is one of those things; however, this time the circumstances are different. Single-gender education can be the act of establishing an all-female or all-male classroom or school. From the beginning of America’s educational endeavors up to the early years of the 20th century, single-gender educational classes were common, especially for secondary schools, during that

time only boys attended school (Bracey, 2007; Spielhagen, 2008). Spielhagen goes on to note that comprehensive coeducation at the high school level, in many respects, owes its existence to John Dewey's disciples, who called for its creation to provide a well-rounded education for all students. As coeducational classes became the "rule," physical education classes remained the exception until 1975. In the 1975 Title IX legislation, the separation option was deemed inappropriate, and schools began to cease operations of their single-gender classrooms.

During the late part of the 20th century, the discourse about single-gender instruction again arose, and the debate about its benefits reemerged. The argument for single-gender instruction seemingly got traction from the issues girls in coeducational classes appeared to be having in math and science. Since the prevailing wisdom was that boys did better in math and science than girls, the question was, would girls be more successful if they attended all-girl math or science classes? American Association of University Women (AAUW) (1992) reported that girls in a coeducational environment not only lagged behind boys in math and science, but also behaved passively and were "silenced" in the classroom, while boys were more actively engaged and encouraged to participate. They also noted that the self-esteem of adolescent girls tended to decline while the self-esteem of adolescent boys went in the opposite direction. The finding in the AAUW's report became the stimulus for several states to begin creating single-gender classrooms and all-girls schools at the elementary and secondary levels (Cerven, 2002). Thus, "in 2002 an amendment to No Child Left Behind legislation opened the door for schools to experiment with single-sex classes as a means of improving educational outcomes for all students" (Spielhagen, 2008, p. 3).

The National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE), now named the National Association for Choice in Education (NACE), is "a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization

founded in 2002, dedicated to the advancement of single-sex public education for both girls and boys,” (National Association for Single Sex Public Education [NASSPE (1)], n.d.). Their mission is to (1) provide professional development for teachers, (2) serve as a resource for teachers, parents, and administrators regarding single-sex education, and (3) provide a clearinghouse for relevant information about public schools and classrooms in the United States (National Association for Single Sex Public Education [NASSPE (3)], n.d.). On their website NASSPE joined the single-sex vs. coed education debate referring to multiple studies and various works (National Association for Single Sex Public Education [NASSPE (2)], n.d.). For example, a Cambridge University study in which researchers reported that the boys’ single-sex classroom format produced effective results in terms of their performance in English and foreign languages. A study of 9th to 12th grade boys in England, from July 2002 found that single-gender schools were beneficial not only for boys deemed as low-achievers, but also for high-achievers. The results of an Australian study conducted in 2000 indicated that boys and girls educated in single-sex classrooms scored an average of 15 to 22 percentile ranks higher than their counterparts from coeducational settings and that students in single-sex schools tended to be better behaved and were had a more positive attitude toward learning. They also noted results from the Park et al. (2012) study which posited that boys who graduated from all-boys schools were significantly more likely to attend a 4-year college than boys who graduated from coed schools. Park et al. (2012) also noted that boys at single-sex schools also earned significantly higher Korean and English test scores than boys at coed schools, which seemingly indicates that the males in the study that attended single-sex schools perform academically better than those at coed schools. While there appears to be a great amount of positive results regarding single-gender education, there are also those who are not in favor or who find there is no added benefit

to the separation. According to Bracey (2007), groups like the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the Feminist Majority Foundation believe coeducation is best. Organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) entertain a number of arguments against single-sex education from paralleling gender segregation with racial segregation to arguing that separate systems instill stereotypical notions and self-fulfilling prophecies (Cerven, 2002). Also, some believe that single-gender schools and classrooms violate Title IX's anti-discrimination provisions (Bigler & Signorella, 2011).

Peer Influence

Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani (2001) note that as parental influence is maximized, peer impact on youth is minimized. Darenbourg & Blake (2014) appeared to agree but expanded this idea by stating, "while parents' values shape pre-middle school identity, peer influence is twice as important as parent influence once students enter middle school" (p. 193) and they gave credit to Bates (2004). According to Woodcock & Olson Beal (2013), Astin (1993) noted that "the single most potent source of influence on growth and development" (p. 73), for the undergraduate is that of peers.

Fryer & Torelli (2010) maintain that a classic model of peer pressure is evident for minorities when their rise in achievement causes a fall in their social status as they face accusations of "acting white." Harper (2006) provides an example of peer support influencing a group of high-achieving African American male undergraduates' collegiate successes. In this study, Harper explored the concept of acting white through a group of "high-achieving African American male undergraduates at six predominately White universities" (Harper, 2006, p. 337). Through individual interviews, he found that these young men attribute a great deal of their

success in higher education to their peers. He notes that the young men participating in the study recounted the tremendous support they received from other African American males and females and how they would not have accomplished as much as they did without that support. Harper (2006, p. 347) quoted one student who said, “There is no way I would have been nearly as successful at Ohio State were it not for the support of other African American students here. They have applauded everything I have done so far.” He goes on to note that “when asked to whom they would attribute their college achievements, the high-achievers consistently replied: (1) God, (2) themselves, (3) their parents, and (4) their peers—almost always in that order” (Harper, 2006, p. 347).

Peers can influence an individual positively or negatively. The impact of peers can cause one to persist, complete, and even excel, or it can cause one to flounder, quit, or simply not put forth the effort to live up to one’s potential for fear of being ostracized, ridiculed, or have one’s loyalty or ethnicity questioned.

The Community College

The community college is any public or private, two-year comprehensive or technical institute that is “regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree,” according to (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 5). Community colleges were established to fill the needed role of providing citizens of their respective communities the opportunity to gain a postsecondary education. Community colleges are tasked with providing developmental education, vocational-technical education, transfer preparation, continuing education, and community service to a diverse population (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, literature associated with the all-male early college study was explored and analyzed for relevance to and support of this study. Early college literature was the first to be reviewed in order to understand this educational entity and its philosophy. Next, the conceptual framework theory was analyzed to ensure it could support this study. The single-gender education literature was explored to gain insight into one of the unique aspects of this study, which is that the early college is all-male. The influence of referent individuals on the decisions people make was probed in the peer-influence literature. And, lastly, information about the community college was addressed to provide some understanding about the community college environment.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

For this study, Q Methodology was used to explore the decision to participate in an all-male early college from the students' perspective. Select all-male early-college completers from the 2013 and 2014 cohorts were asked to consider their decision to participate in this program and why. The study explores the following question: What are the highest and lowest rated factors that influenced all-male early college graduates to participate in this early-college and why?

The research methods section provides an overview of Q Methodology, followed by an explanation of each of the methods' five steps along with a description of how each step was used in this study. The chapter also addresses ethical considerations and limitations for the study. A summary concludes the chapter.

Overview of Q Methodology

According to McKeown & Thomas (2013), Q methodology and its techniques make for a "comprehensive approach with its own principles for studying human behavior," (p. 1). To explain Q methodology, Brown (1980) compares *R* method to *Q* method, noting that *R* methodology calls for objective analysis, meaning the analysis is focused on individual's traits with a determination that person *a* has more of trait A than person *b*. On the other hand, *Q* methodology deals "fundamentally with the individual's subjectivity which takes meaning in terms of the proposition that person *a* values trait A more than trait B" (p. 19). William Stephenson, the architect of *Q* methodology, founded the technique in 1935 as an option to the usual quantitative and qualitative research methods as a way of systematically examining human subjectivity (Brown, 1980; Ellingsen, Storksen, & Stephens, 2010). Human subjectivity can be described as a person's opinion, belief, attitude, viewpoint, etc., (McKeown & Thomas, 2013;

Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). In short, Q methodology is a mixed methods research technique that systematically explores an individual's viewpoint or preference through that individual's ordering/ranking of statements or objects.

The quantitative aspects of Q methodology, which can be attributed to Stephenson, studying under Charles Spearman, the "father" of factor analysis (Brown, 1980; Ellingsen et al., 2010), are exhibited during both the data collection phase and the data analysis phase. During data collection, the focus is on the sorting process and gathering demographic information; and, during data analysis, the focus is on correlation and factor analysis. The qualitative facets of the research are exhibited in the research preparation; and, after the participants' sort, they are given an opportunity to note why they made certain choices and provide additional information they wish to share. The gathering of additional information from select participants after the data analysis also lends itself to the qualitative phase of this research.

The systematic approach to conducting a Q methodology study is normally performed as follows: McKeown & Thomas (2013) state that the typical sequence is –

Step 1: Develop the Q sample (concourse theory) – develop a series of statements (Q Set) the participants will be asked to sort.

Step 2: Select the participants (P Set) – large sample sizes are not necessary for the study to be generalizable to the population.

Step 3: Data collection – participants (P Set) are asked to sort the statement (Q Set) into a defined distribution.

Step 4: Data analysis – consists of factor extraction and analysis.

Step 5: Interpretation of results.

Bartlett II & DeWeese (2015) divided step 1 into two steps and combined steps 4 and 5 into one step. Their steps are defined as follows:

Step 1: Define the Concourse – the list of items used to describe perspectives for the research.

Step 2: Develop the Q-Set – the list of items the participants will sort to describe their perspective.

Step 3: Select the P-Set – the individuals who will sort the Q-set.

Step 4: Conduct the Q-Sort – administer the Q-sort, the sorting process which the P-set used to rank the items in the Q-set.

Step 5: Analyze and Interpret the Results – consists of factor analysis – calculate the correlation matrix of Q, factor rotation, and factor score calculation.

For this study, the researcher used the Bartlett II and DeWeese model.

Defining the Concourse

Defining the concourse begins with identifying the topic of interest and gathering/developing a comprehensive collection of statements or items describing various perspectives about the topic (McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Paige, 2014). The concourse is a list of statements or items that represent the conversation around the topic relative to one's self-reference of feelings, ideas, point of view, attitude, and experiences (Bartlett II & DeWeese, 2015; Shemmings & Ellingsen, 2012). For this study, the concourse was derived from a literature review of a variety of areas surrounding early college, influence, single-gender education, and conversations with some of the all-male early college participants and associated administrators, faculty, and staff. The concourse contained 106 statements. From the concourse, a group of statements representative of the topic of interest was created (the Q-Set).

Developing the Q-Set

The Q-Set is a collection of statements about a topic that the study participants sort according to instructions. The process of reducing the 106 statements from the concourse involved removing or combining statements that were essentially the same, amending statements that were too long, clarifying statements that were poorly written or confusing, including some negatively worded statements (i.e., in spite of ...) to balance what could possibly be perceived as a positive slant to the statements around participating in an early-college, and ensuring each statement addressed a single key factor. After the first edit, the remaining 82 statements were associated with the theory of planned behavior beliefs. According to Watts & Stenner (2005), “a Q set of somewhere between 40 and 80 statements is considered satisfactory. Any less than this and issues of adequate coverage may be a problem. Any more and the sorting process can become unnecessarily unwieldy” (p. 75).

After several statement reviews, the final Q-Set focused on gathering the highest and lowest rated factors that influenced the all-male early college graduates and non-early college graduates from the class of 2017 and the class of 2018, who were eighteen years of age and older, to participate in this early-college contained 49 statements. Table 3.1 displays the Q-Set statements, reference to their source, and their connection to the theory of planned behavior.

Table 3.1. Study Q-Set.

No.	Statement	Source	Conceptual Framework Construct/Belief
1	Wanted more academic rigor.	Alaie, 2010; DiMaria, 2013; Fischetti, MacKain, & Smith, 2011; Hoffman & Webb, 2010; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral

Table 3.1. (continued).

2	High school classes were boring.	Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
3	Complete high school quicker.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; Fischetti, MacKain, & Smith, 2011; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
4	To get college credit for free.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; Born, 2006; Hoffman & Webb, 2010; Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 Early Post-Secondary Education Opportunities Survey Results	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
5	Thought I would get more freedom.	Hoffman & Webb, 2010; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Perceived behavioral control/ Control
6	To earn high school and college credit.	DiMaria, 2013; Hoffman & Webb, 2010; Morrow & Torrez, 2012; Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
7	To earn an associate degree.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; DiMaria, 2013; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
8	Attend classes with more mature students.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; DiMaria, 2013; Hoffman & Webb, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
9	My family's support.	Darensbourg & Blake, 2014; Hayes, Blake, Darensbourg, & Castillo, 2014; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Ongaga, 2010; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 College Persistence Questionnaire	Subjective norm/ Normative
10	Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.	McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral

Table 3.1. (continued).

11	To make new friends.	McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
12	My parents made me.	DiMaria, 2013; Fischetti, MacKain, & Smith, 2011; Ongaga, 2010 conversations w/EC students	Subjective norm/ Normative
13	Support of high school peers not in the EC.	Darensbourg & Blake, 2014; Fischetti, MacKain, & Smith, 2011; Hayes, Blake, Darensbourg, & Castillo, 2014; Ongaga, 2010; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009;	Subjective norm/ Normative
14	Single-gender education intrigued me.	conversations w/faculty	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
15	To get away from the high school crowd.	McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
16	It felt good to be recommended.	conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
17	Cool thing to be part of.	conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
18	My friends were participating.	Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
19	Expectations were clearly communicated.	Newton & Vogt, 2008; conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
20	Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
21	For the older women.	conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
22	To meet some different girls.	conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
23	Because of its prestige.	conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral

Table 3.1. (continued).

24	In spite of high school teachers' discouragement.	Morrow & Torrez, 2012; conversations w/EC students	Subjective norm/ Normative
25	Graduating from high school and college at the same time.	DiMaria, 2013; Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
26	College degree will help me financially and socially.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Vargas, 2013 conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
27	Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
28	My family could not afford college.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; Webb & Gerwin, 2014; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
29	Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
30	Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	Alaie, 2010; DiMaria, 2013; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
31	Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	DiMaria, 2013; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Fischetti, MacKain, & Smith, 2011; Ongaga, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
32	It would help me mature.	Hoffman & Webb, 2010; McDonald & Farrell, 2012;	Perceived behavioral control/ Control
33	Program would help me learn to focus.	Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007	Perceived behavioral control/ Control
34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	Alaie, 2010; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Perceived behavioral control/ Control
35	Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	Alaie, 2010; Born, 2006; McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral

Table 3.1. (continued).

36	EC students hold each other to high expectations.	McDonald & Farrell, 2012; Ongaga, 2010; Thompson & Ongaga, 2011	Subjective norm/ Normative
37	To fulfill my parents' expectations.	Agliata & Renk, 2009; Darensbourg & Blake, 2014; College Persistence Questionnaire conversations w/EC students	Subjective norm/ Normative
38	In spite of my parents' expectations.	Agliata & Renk, 2009	Subjective norm/ Normative
39	EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.	Proactive Attitude Scale	Perceived behavioral control/ Control
40	Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	Early Post-Secondary Education Opportunities Survey Results	Subjective norm/ Normative
41	In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	Abdul-Alim, 2012; Tucker, Smith-Adcock, & Trepal, 2011 conversations w/EC students	Subjective norm/ Normative
42	Neighborhood support.	Head, 1999; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009	Subjective norm/ Normative
43	Close friends support.	Darensbourg & Blake, 2014; Hayes, Blake, Darensbourg, & Castillo, 2014; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009;	Subjective norm/ Normative
44	See my pathway to a four-year degree.	Vargas, 2013; Webb & Gerwin, 2014; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
45	To be better prepared for college.	Hoffman & Webb, 2010; Vargas, 2013; Webb & Gerwin, 2014; Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
46	EC peers support.	Darensbourg & Blake, 2014; Dessoff, 2011; Hayes, Blake, Darensbourg, & Castillo, 2014; Ongaga, 2010; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009; Thompson & Ongaga, 2011; Webb & Gerwin, 2014	Subjective norm/ Normative

Table 3.1. (continued).

47	I like a challenge.	Woodcock & Olson Beal, 2013 CD-RISC	Perceived behavioral control/ Control
48	Advisement from those associated with this early college.	McDonald & Farrell, 2012; College Persistence Questionnaire conversations w/EC students	Attitude toward the behavior/ Behavioral
49	High school administration and staff support.	Conversation with administration	Subjective norm/ Normative

Selecting the P-Set

The P-Set is those individuals participating in the study who have been asked to use their perspective, judgement, preference, or feelings to rank-order the statements (Q-Set) using a “quasi-normal” distribution (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). According to Brown (1980), regarding the sample size for a Q Methodology study, “only a few subjects are required” (p. 191). He goes on to note that results of the study can be generalized to the population because “all that is required are enough subjects to establish the existence of a factor for purposes of comparing one factor to another” (p. 192).

This study sought the perspective of the following participants:

- The members of the 2013 cohort of the all-male early college. The early college graduates and those who did not graduate from the early college (Class of 2017).
- The members of the 2014 cohort of the all-male early college. The early college graduates and those who did not graduate from the early college who were eighteen years of age and above (Class of 2018).

The total P-Set consisted of ten (10) early college graduates, seven (7) from the 2013 cohort, and three (3) from the 2014 cohort.

Conducting the Q-Sort

During the Q-Sort, the Q-Set, the final collection of statements in the form of a group of cards with one statement on each card, is given to the participants (P-Set) for them to sort in accordance with the guidelines provided by the researcher (Bartlett II & DeWeese, 2015; Brown, 1980; Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The participants are asked to “read each statement, place the statements into three piles, one pile for agree, one pile for disagree, and then one neutral pile” (Bartlett II & DeWeese, 2015, p. 76). The participants are then asked to “sort agree and disagree piles further using a graphic” distribution scale, that will be provided by the researcher, to rank those items (Bartlett II & DeWeese, 2015, p. 76).

For this study, participants were asked to sort a group of statements, either in person or electronically, in terms of the most representative of the reason or that which influenced/impacted their decision to participate in this all-male early college, least representative of the reason or that which had the least influence/impact on their decision to participate in this all-male early college, or neutral to their decision to participate in this all-male early college. The sort instructions are in Appendix A. Once sorted, they were asked to rank the highest and lowest reasons statements and place them on the provided grid (Appendix B) in the corresponding order of their ranking.

Next, the participants were asked to identify the statement they selected as most representative and why. They were asked to identify the statement they selected as least representative and why. They were asked to identify the statements they found difficult to place and why. They were asked to identify the statement (s), if any, that had the most impact on their sorting and why. They were asked to share any statement(s) they determined was missing from

the sort. And lastly, they were asked to provide some demographic information. Post-sort questions and information request are in Appendix C.

Analyzing and Interpreting the Results

During data analysis, the chosen participants' (P-Set) individual ranked sorts are subject to factor analysis. Individual analyses are then compared/analyzed to identify the similarities and differences in viewpoints of the participants. This correlation provides evidence of subjectivity. Van Exel & De Graaf (2005) note that, according to Stephenson (1935), if "significant clusters of correlations exist, they could be factorized [*sic*], described as common viewpoints (or tastes, preferences, dominant accounts, typologies, et cetera), and individuals could be measured with respect to them" (p.1). Bartlett II & DeWeese (2015) note that "the data analysis step in Q methodology" is factor analysis, and they go on to say, "performing factor analysis will unearth the relationships that exist between the individual sorters," (p. 78)."

R Software with the Q Methodology module and PQMethod (2.35, Mar 2014, by Peter Schmolck) software were used during the data analysis phase of this study. The researcher performed data analysis to determine the relationships between individual sorters and identified factors that may assist the school district and early college administration in the recruitment and selection of potential all-male early college participants. The analysis revealed that the factors that most influenced the study's participants' decision to choose to participate in the all-male early college were associated with either their desire to get a college education or their aspiration to fulfill the expectations or as acknowledgement of the support of those close to them.

Ethical Considerations

The participants in this study were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Though there were no

identifiable risks for the participants, one had to keep in mind that some of the early college participants were younger than eighteen years of age and, although no one under the age of eighteen was allowed to participate in this study, confidentiality was imperative. Permission was required from the participants, the high school, and the community college affiliated with this study.

All initial attempts to communicate with the potential participants was done via phone. Those who agreed to participate in the study signed an informed consent statement (Appendix D) before beginning the Q-sort activity. Participants were allowed to stop at any time during the Q-sort process, post-sort questions or conversations. All data was coded to protect participants anonymity. All printed materials including individual sorts, post-sort questions and demographic information, and conversation notes were kept in a locked safe at the researcher's home. All electronic data was kept on a password-protected computer and on a flash drive in password-protected files that only the researcher could access.

Limitations

1. The number of students from each ethnic group to take part in the Q-Sort.
2. The assumption that all participants would give the sorting their full attention.
3. The fact that the early college students were all-male may hinder any generalizability of this study to female early college students.
4. The fact that there were a low number of participants may hinder the generalizability of the study.
5. The researcher's lack of experience conducting Q methodology research could have led to some element of this type of research not being fully developed or engaged.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, Q methodology and all of its elements was explained. The relationship between Q-methodology's elements and this research was also explored and identified. The connections between the Q-set, source of the statements, and the constructs and beliefs within the conceptual framework were also displayed in this chapter. Ethical considerations for the study, along with some limitations, were identified.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to learn why the participants of the first two cohorts, 2013 and 2014, of a new all-male early college chose to be a part of this newly formed collaborative effort of their school district and the local community college to create a simultaneous high school and two-year college degree completion opportunity. At decision time, these young men were eighth grade students being asked to make a choice that would impact their high school attendance, something many middle schoolers anticipate. The participants in the 2013 cohort had no point of reference on which to base their decision. Since this was a new venture for the high school and the community college with which it partnered, no former students were available to share their experiences, to divulge warnings or expectations, or to indicate whether participation was beneficial. By the time the second cohort was being formed, the first cohort was still in the process of completing the joint venture and was unable to give an account of the opportunity. So, this research asked what were the highest and lowest rated factors that influenced the all-male early college participants of the 2013 cohort (graduating class of 2017) and the all-male early college participants of the 2014 cohort (graduating class of 2018) to participate in this early-college experience?

To answer the research question, this chapter contains the results of the Q-sorts and the qualitative data captured from the post-sort questions and interviews. Ten (10) of a possible thirty-eight (38) early college participants from the 2013 and 2014 cohorts participated in this study. Of the thirty-eight (38) early college participants, twenty-three (23) are early college graduates. The ten (10) participants in this study are all early college graduates. No non-completers chose to participate in this study. Seven (7) 2017 early college graduates (members

of the 2013 cohort) and three (3) 2018 early college graduates (members of the 2014 cohort) conducted the Q-sorts in the study. The ethnicities of the gentlemen participating in this study included seven (7) African Americans, one (1) Caucasian, one (1) Hispanic/Latino, and one (1) Multi-racial. The study's Q-set contained forty-nine (49) statements.

Once all Q-sorts were conducted, the data was entered into the R Software with Q Methodology module and PQMethod (2.35, Mar 2014, by Peter Schmolck) software programs for quantitative analysis. According to Van Exel & De Graaf (2005) this analysis is "a purely technical, objective procedure," (p. 8). The software program provided a statistical display of factors, variances, and relationships between and among groups. This chapter includes the correlation matrix, factor analysis, factor loadings, factor scores, and defining (distinguishing and consensus) statements.

Correlation Matrix

A correlation matrix is a table displaying all possible correlations among all variables in the set (Bryant & Yarnold, 2010; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). It is important to note that the variables are the sorts of the individuals participating and not the items being sorted. Van Exel & De Graaf (2005) note that the correlation matrix "represents the level of (dis)agreement between the individual sorts, that is, the degree of (dis)similarity in points of view between the individual Q sorters" (p. 8). Watts & Stenner (2005) state "the initial correlation matrix duly reflects the relationship of each (Q sort) configuration with every other (Q sort) configuration (not the relationship of each item with every other item)" (p. 80). There are ten sorters in this study (n=10) thus, the correlation matrix for this study measured 10 x 10 (Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Correlation coefficients in the matrix range from a "perfect

positive correlation” of +1.00 to a “perfect negative correlation” of -1.00, indicating how well each participant’s sort agrees/disagrees with another participant’s sort (Brown, 1993, p. 108).

Table 4.1 displays this study’s correlation matrix. The highest correlation is found with Participant 5 and Participant 7 with a .68 coefficient. Participant 5 also has a .62 correlation coefficient with Participant 9. The lowest correlation is Participant 2 and Participant 3 with a coefficient of .10.

Table 4.1. Correlation Matrix Between Sorts.

Participant	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
P1	1.00	0.48	0.15	0.53	0.40	0.34	0.52	0.50	0.56	0.22
P2	0.48	1.00	0.10	0.47	0.33	0.23	0.41	0.35	0.38	0.25
P3	0.15	0.10	1.00	0.45	0.27	0.30	0.31	0.56	0.34	0.48
P4	0.53	0.47	0.45	1.00	0.55	0.52	0.61	0.50	0.59	0.53
P5	0.40	0.33	0.27	0.55	1.00	0.39	0.68	0.53	0.62	0.34
P6	0.34	0.23	0.30	0.52	0.39	1.00	0.27	0.21	0.37	0.28
P7	0.52	0.41	0.31	0.61	0.68	0.27	1.00	0.45	0.56	0.46
P8	0.50	0.35	0.56	0.50	0.53	0.21	0.45	1.00	0.60	0.29
P9	0.56	0.38	0.34	0.59	0.62	0.37	0.56	0.60	1.00	0.32
P10	0.22	0.25	0.48	0.53	0.34	0.28	0.46	0.29	0.32	1.00

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is the next step in the data analysis process. This process analyzes the correlation matrix data in order to “identify the number of natural groupings of Q sorts by virtue of being similar or dissimilar to one another” (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005, p. 8). Bartlett II & DeWeese (2015) describes factor analysis as a way of finding “the relationships that exists between the individual sorters” (p. 78). Brown (1993) noted that in Q methodology, factor analysis examines a correlation matrix and “determines how many basically different Q sorts are

in evidence,” (p. 111). Brown (1993) also says that factor analysis tells us how many different factors are in the sort. The Q sort software produced the factor analysis and provided clusters of participants with similar sorts.

Factor rotation. After reviewing the data in the unrotated factor matrix, Table 4.2, it was determined that a Varimax rotation would be used to rotate solutions beginning with four factors, even though the unrotated factors showed only two factors with eigenvalues over 1.0. It was determined that starting with four factors would verify if a two-factor solution, as suggested by the eigenvalues, would be the best solution.

Table 4.2. Unrotated Factor Matrix.

Participant	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
P1	0.6889	-0.4393	-0.0233	-0.0842
P2	0.5727	-0.4427	0.1197	0.3606
P3	0.5542	0.6945	-0.198	-0.0943
P4	0.8412	0.0678	0.2203	0.0497
P5	0.7602	-0.1081	-0.0772	-0.0872
P6	0.5467	0.0965	0.6429	-0.4843
P7	0.7826	-0.1107	-0.0456	0.2673
P8	0.732	0.0835	-0.5159	-0.1835
P9	0.7928	-0.1438	-0.1754	-0.2148
P10	0.5882	0.4814	0.2238	0.4904
Eigenvalues	4.817	1.1685	0.8709	0.7824
% expl.Var.	48	12	9	8

Table 4.3 details the information used to determine the factor rotation to be used in this study.

Table 4.3. Information Used to Determine the Factor Rotation.

Factor rotation solution	Eigen value included	Explained variance	Number of participants loaded	Reliability	Reasoning
4 Factors	2.4	24	3	0.92	Rejected because it did not account for all participants
	2.3	23	2	0.89	
	1.6	16	1	0.80	
	1.3	13	1	0.80	
3 Factors	3.4	34	5	0.95	Rejected because it did not account for all participants
	2.0	20	2	0.89	
	1.5	15	1	0.80	
2 Factors	3.5	35	7	0.97	Not rejected because it accounted for all participants
	2.5	25	3	0.92	

The results of the factor rotation solutions were evaluated to identify the best solution, one that balances high explained variance and a large amount of participants loaded. Although the four-factor solution explained the largest amount of variance, 76%, within the sample population, it was rejected because it only loaded seven of the ten participants (70%). The three-factor solution explained 69% of the variances within the sample population and loaded 80% of the participants; however, it was also rejected in favor of the two-factor solution. The two-factor solution explained a relatively high percentage of the variance within the population, 60%, and it loaded 100% of the participants. The researcher determined that, with the small number of participants, it was important to include as many as possible. Also, as data will show later in the study, including all participants was important to ensure that at least two Q sorts loaded significantly on each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Factor loadings. Factor loadings help define the factors (Ellingsen et al., 2010). Factor loads show how each Q sort correlates with each factor, in which case, participants with similar subjective viewpoints share the same factor. Once the factor loads were determined, the software programs flagged the Q sort(s) that loaded significantly upon a factor. Watts & Stenner (2005) refer to these significantly loading Q sorts as “factor exemplars,” which they define as the Q sorts that “exemplify the shared item pattern or configuration that is characteristic of that factor” (p. 81).

Table 4.4 shows the factor loads with x(s) that identify the significant loads for that factor.

Table 4.4. Factor Loadings.

Participant	Factor 1	Factor 2
P1	0.815 x	0.0633
P2	0.724 x	-0.0093
P3	0.025	0.8881 x
P4	0.631 x	0.56
P5	0.672 x	0.3708
P6	0.379	0.4059 x
P7	0.692 x	0.3822
P8	0.535 x	0.5069
P9	0.72 x	0.3619
P10	0.18	0.7384 x

x denotes significant load

All ten participants loaded significantly on one of the factors. Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 loaded significantly on Factor 1, while Participants 3, 6, and 10 loaded significantly on Factor 2. Noteworthy, is the fact that many of the participants’ loads were no contest, the factor loads of Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 10. However, participants 4, 6, and 8 appear to share space in both factors.

Correlation between factors. Table 4.5 shows the correlation between the factors (how the two factors relate to each other). The z-scores are being used to provide standardization of the data. According to Agresti & Finlay (2009, p. 55) “the number of standard deviations that an observation falls from the mean is called its z-score.” For this study, the z-score indicates how much and in which direction a statement deviates from its distribution mean.

Table 4.5. Correlation between Factor Z-Scores.

	Factor 1 z-scores	Factor 2 z-scores
Factor 1 z-scores	1.00	0.45
Factor 2 z-scores	0.45	1.00

Factor scores. Table 4.6 shows how each factor group sorted the statements. To determine a factor’s score for the group, the R with Q Methodology module and PQMethod software programs combine the values of the individuals that load high on that factor and provide a weighted average of those scores (z-scores). Z-scores help to return a single score in the same format that the participants used when sorting the statements. “A factor score is the score for a statement as a kind of average of the scores given that statement by all of the Q sorts associated with the factor,” (Brown, 1993, p. 117). The placements show how each statement fell under each factor. For example, Statement 6 ranked the highest, +6, under Factor 1. Under Factor 2, Statement 37 received the +6 ranking. The statements that ranked the lowest, -6, were Statement 22 for Factor 1 and Statement 21 for Factor 2. “What we get is an impression of which statements are typically placed on the most positive side or the most negative side of the grid by individuals associated with the factor,” (Ellingsen et al., 2010, p. 401).

Table 4.6. Q-Set Statements Factors Scores.

No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	Wanted more academic rigor.	-1	2
2	High school classes were boring.	-2	3
3	Complete high school quicker.	-1	1
4	To get college credit for free.	5	4
5	Thought I would get more freedom.	1	-1
6	To earn high school and college credit.	6	2
7	To earn an associate degree.	5	4
8	Attend classes with more mature students.	0	-2
9	My family's support.	3	1
10	Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.	1	-4
11	To make new friends.	0	-1
12	My parents made me.	-4	-3
13	Support of high school peers not in the EC.	-1	-2
14	Single-gender education intrigued me.	-3	-2
15	To get away from the high school crowd.	-5	-3
16	It felt good to be recommended.	2	4
17	Cool thing to be part of.	0	-1
18	My friends were participating.	-4	3
19	Expectations were clearly communicated.	1	-1
20	Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	-4	-5
21	For the older women.	-5	-6
22	To meet some different girls.	-6	-4
23	Because of its prestige.	2	0
24	In spite of high school teachers' discouragement.	-2	-4
25	Graduating from high school and college at the same time.	4	2
26	College degree will help me financially and socially.	4	3
27	Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	-3	-2
28	My family could not afford college.	0	3
29	Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	-1	0
30	Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	3	1

Table 4.6. (continued).

31	Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	1	-1
32	It would help me mature.	2	-3
33	Program would help me learn to focus.	3	1
34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	-1	5
35	Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	0	-1
36	EC students hold each other to high expectations.	0	0
37	To fulfill my parents' expectations.	2	6
38	In spite of my parents' expectations.	-2	-3
39	EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.	1	1
40	Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	2	0
41	In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	-2	-5
42	Neighborhood support.	-3	-2
43	Close friends support.	-3	5
44	See my pathway to a four-year degree.	3	0
45	To be better prepared for college.	4	0
46	EC peers support.	-2	2
47	I like a challenge.	1	2
48	Advisement from those associated with this early college.	0	0
49	High school administration and staff support.	-1	1

Factor 1. Table 4.7 shows the highest and lowest placed cards in the sort for Factor 1 group participants. The statements garner the distinction of being placed in the +6, +5, +4, -4, -5, and -6 positions on the sorting grid and are determined to be the most and least impactful, respectively, as they relate to Factor 1. Seven participants loaded on Factor 1. The ranking of these statements provided some insight onto what this group of young men appeared to focus when making their decision to participate in the all-male early college. The highest ranked

statement by the participants loading significantly for Factor 1 was “to earn high school and college credit.”

The six highest ranked statements around Factor 1 focused on the desire of these participants to take advantage of this opportunity to get a college degree or at least college credit while still in high school. The Factor 1s are “*All About Education.*” The group ranked statements 6, 7, 4, 25, 45, and 26 as having had the most influence/impact on their decision to participate in the all-male early college. These participants ranked statements related to females, high school experiences, along with parents’ pressures, and friends’ participation as having had the least influence/impact upon their decision to participate. This groups least influential/impactful reasons were statements 22, 15, 21, 18, 20, and 12.

Table 4.7. Factor 1 High-Positive and High-Negative Statements.

Score	Card #	Statement
6	6	To earn high school and college credit.
5	7	To earn an associate degree.
5	4	To get college credit for free.
4	25	Graduating from high school and college at the same time.
4	45	To be better prepared for college.
4	26	College degree will help me financially and socially.
-4	12	My parents made me.
-4	20	Wasn’t treated fair at the high school.
-4	18	My friends were participating.
-5	21	For the older women.
-5	15	To get away from the high school crowd.
-6	22	To meet some different girls.

Table 4.8 shows the sequence of statements and their z-scores for Factor 1 participants. The ranking statements for Factor 1 participants include reasons which had the most influence/

impact (z-score of 2.040) to the least influence/impact on their choice to participate in the all-male early college (z-score of -1.546).

Table 4.8. Factor 1 – Normalized Factor Scores.

No.	Statement	Z-score
6	To earn high school and college credit.	2.04
7	To earn an associate degree.	2.039
4	Get college credit for free.	1.839
25	Graduating from high school and college at the same time.	1.791
45	To be better prepared for college.	1.678
26	College degree will help me financially and socially.	1.538
30	Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	1.286
44	See my pathway to a four-year degree.	1.057
9	My family's support.	1.017
33	Program would help me learn to focus.	0.926
40	Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	0.7
37	To fulfill my parents' expectations.	0.618
32	It would help me mature.	0.525
23	Because of its prestige.	0.476
16	It felt good to be recommended.	0.475
31	Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	0.305
10	Experience the close-knit environment of EC.	0.271
47	I like a challenge.	0.267
39	EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.	0.194
5	Thought I would get more freedom.	0.173
19	Expectations were clearly communicated.	0.172
35	Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	0.147
17	Cool thing to be part of.	0.143

Table 4.8. (continued).

11	To make new friends.	0.107
8	Attend classes with more mature students.	-0.041
36	EC students hold each other to high expectations.	-0.055
28	My family could not afford college.	-0.061
48	Advisement from those associated with this early college.	-0.068
3	Complete high school quicker.	-0.116
1	Wanted more academic rigor.	-0.327
29	Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	-0.337
49	High school administration and staff support.	-0.508
34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	-0.583
13	Support of high school peers not in EC.	-0.646
41	In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	-0.774
24	In spite of high school teachers discouragement.	-0.836
46	EC peers support.	-0.873
38	In spite of my parents' expectations.	-0.913
2	High school classes were boring.	-1.035
27	Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	-1.167
42	Neighborhood support.	-1.19
14	Single-gender education intrigued me.	-1.204
43	Close friends support.	-1.204
12	My parents made me.	-1.21
20	Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	-1.211
18	My friends were participating.	-1.221
21	For the older women.	-1.258
15	To get away from the high school crowd.	-1.401
22	To meet some different girls.	-1.546

Figure 4.1 displays a model sort for the participants who loaded significantly on Factor 1. As evidenced by the statements' z-scores, the statement with the highest agreement among the participants, who loaded significantly on Factor 1, is located under the +6 column, and the statement with the lowest agreement is located under the -6 column. Statements are ordered in the model sort just as they are in the table from +6 to -6. Watts & Stenner (2012) stated that the model sort, which they call a factor array, is:

“... in fact, no more or less than a single Q sort configured to represent the viewpoint of a particular factor. This factor array or factor exemplifying Q sort always conforms to the same distribution used in the original data collection and it is constructed by reference to the size and ultimately the rank order of the z scores.” (p. 140)

They note that its main goal “is to provide the best possible estimate of the relevant factor and, in so doing, to give a sense of what its 100% or perfectly loading Q sort might actually look like,” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 141). The model sort is a visual display of the data in Table 4.8.

Least Impact			Neutral					Most Impact				
-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
22. To meet some different girls.	21. For the older women.	12. My parents made me.	27. Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	41. In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	3. Complete high school quicker.	35. Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	31. Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	40. Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	30. Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	25. Graduating from high school and college at the same time.	7. To earn an associate degree.	6. To earn high school and college credit.
	15. To get away from the high school crowd.	20. Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	42. Neighborhood support.	24. In spite of high school teachers discouragement.	1. Wanted more academic rigor.	17. Cool thing to be part of.	10. Experience the close-knit environment of EC.	37. To fulfill my parents' expectations.	44. See my pathway to a four-year degree.	45. To be better prepared for college.	4. Get college credit for free.	
		18. My friends were participating.	14. Single-gender education intrigued me.	46. EC peers support.	29. Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	11. To make new friends.	47. I like a challenge.	32. It would help me mature.	9. My family's support.	26. College degree will help me financially and socially.		
			43. Close friends support.	38. In spite of my parents' expectations.	49. High school administration and staff support.	8. Attend classes with more mature students.	39. EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.	23. Because of its prestige	33. Program would help me learn to focus.			
				2. High school classes were boring.	34. No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	36. EC students hold each other to high expectations.	5. Thought I would get more freedom.	16. It felt good to be recommended.				
					13. Support of high school peers not in EC.	28. My family could not afford college.	19. Expectations were clearly communicated.					
						48. Advice from those associated with this early college.						

Figure 4.1. Factor 1 Model Sort.

Factor 2. Table 4.9 shows the highest and lowest placed cards in the sort for Factor 2 group participants. The statements placed in the +6, +5, +4, -4, -5, and -6 positions on the sorting grid are determined to be the most and least impactful, respectively, as they relate to Factor 2. Three participants loaded on Factor 2. The ranking of these statements appears to suggest that, while this group of young men was focused on the benefits of receiving this type of educational opportunity, outside influences like those of parents and friends, along with a perceived freedom of not feeling “under the thumb” seemingly weighed more in their decision to participate in the all-male early college. The highest ranked statement by the participants loading significantly for Factor 2 was “to fulfill my parents’ expectations.”

The six highest ranked statements around factor two included parents’ expectations, perceived freedom of the early college environment, support from friends, getting a free college education, possibility of earning a degree, and the pride of being recommended. The Factor 2 group represents “*Family, Friends, and Freedom.*” The group ranked statements 37, 43, 34, 16, 4, and 7 as having had the most influence/impact on their decision to participate in the all-male early college. These participants ranked statements related to discouragement, females, high school experiences, and closeness of the all-male early college environment as having had the least influence/impact on their decision to participate. Statements 21, 41, 20, 10, 22, and 24 were part of the least impactful group.

Table 4.9. Factor 2 High-Positive and High-Negative Statements.

Score	Card #	Statement
6	37	To fulfill my parents’ expectations.
5	43	Close friends support.
5	34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.
4	16	It felt good to be recommended.
4	4	To get college credit for free.

Table 4.9. (continued).

4	7	To earn an associate degree.
-4	24	In spite of high school teachers' discouragement.
-4	22	To meet some different girls.
-4	10	Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.
-5	20	Wasn't treated fair at the high school.
-5	41	In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.
-6	21	For the older women.

Table 4.10 shows the sequence of statements and their z-scores for Factor 2 participants. The ranking statements for Factor 2 participants include reasons which had the most influence/ impact (z-score of 2.439) to the least influence/impact on their choice to participate in the all-male early college (z-score of -2.101).

Table 4.10. Factor 2 – Normalized Factor Scores.

No.	Statement	Z-score
37	To fulfill my parents' expectations.	2.439
43	Close friends support.	1.858
34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	1.456
16	It felt good to be recommended.	1.425
4	Get college credit for free.	1.13
7	To earn an associate degree.	1.13
26	College degree will help me financially and socially.	1.119
28	My family could not afford college.	0.993
2	High school classes were boring.	0.928
18	My friends were participating.	0.897
46	EC peers support.	0.843
6	To earn high school and college credit.	0.824

Table 4.10. (continued).

47	I like a challenge.	0.792
1	Wanted more academic rigor.	0.791
25	Graduating from high school and college at the same time.	0.749
9	My family's support.	0.529
33	Program would help me learn to focus.	0.529
49	High school administration and staff support.	0.255
3	Complete high school quicker.	0.254
30	Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	0.179
39	EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.	0.169
36	EC students hold each other to high expectations.	0.168
23	Because of its prestige.	0.127
48	Advisement from those associated with this early college.	0.052
40	Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	-0
44	See my pathway to a four-year degree.	-0.074
29	Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	-0.075
45	To be better prepared for college.	-0.168
31	Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	-0.17
5	Thought I would get more freedom.	-0.199
11	To make new friends.	-0.212
19	Expectations were clearly communicated.	-0.243
35	Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	-0.306
17	Cool thing to be part of.	-0.38
27	Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	-0.506
13	Support of high school peers not in EC.	-0.697
8	Attend classes with more mature students.	-0.792
42	Neighborhood support.	-0.94
14	Single-gender education intrigued me.	-0.992
38	In spite of my parents' expectations.	-0.994

Table 4.10. (continued).

32	It would help me mature.	-1.002
12	My parents made me.	-1.161
15	To get away from the high school crowd.	-1.318
24	In spite of high school teachers discouragement.	-1.331
22	To meet some different girls.	-1.341
10	Experience the close-knit environment of EC.	-1.404
20	Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	-1.445
41	In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	-1.785
21	For the older women.	-2.101

Figure 4.2 displays a model sort for the participants who loaded significantly on Factor 2. As indicated by the statements' z-scores, the statement with the highest agreement among the participants, who loaded significantly on Factor 2, is located under the +6 column and, the statement with the lowest agreement is located under the -6 column. Statements are ordered in the model sort just as they are in the table from +6 to -6. The model sort is a visual display of the data in Table 4.10.

Least Impact			Neutral						Most Impact			
-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
21. For the older women.	20. Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	24. In spite of high school teachers' discouragement.	38. In spite of my parents' expectations.	27. Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	31. Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	36. EC students hold each other to high expectations.	9. My family's support.	46. EC peers support.	26. College degree will help me financially and socially.	16. It felt good to be recommended.	43. Close friends support.	37. To fulfill my parents' expectations.
	41. In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	22. To meet some different girls.	32. It would help me mature.	13. Support of high school peers not in the EC.	5. Thought I would get more freedom.	23. Because of its prestige.	33. Program would help me learn to focus.	6. To earn high school and college credit.	28. My family could not afford college.	4. To get college credit for free.	34. No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	
		10. Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.	12. My parents made me.	8. Attend classes with more mature students.	11. To make new friends.	48. Advice from those associated with this early college.	49. High school administration and staff support.	47. I like a challenge.	2. High school classes were boring.	7. To earn an associate degree.		
			15. To get away from the high school crowd.	42. Neighborhood support.	19. Expectations were clearly communicated.	40. Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	3. Complete high school quicker.	1. Wanted more academic rigor.	18. My friends were participating.			
				14. Single-gender education intrigued me.	35. Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	44. See my pathway to a four-year degree.	30. Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	25. Graduating from high school and college at the same time.				
					17. Cool thing to be part of.	29. Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	39. EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.					
						45. To be better prepared for college.						

Figure 4.2. Factor 2 Model Sort.

Factors 1 and Factor 2: same and differing statements. Three statements were sorted the same by the factor one and factor two participant groups. Statement 36, “EC students hold each other to high expectations,” was ranked neutral or 0 by both groups. Statement 40, “information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed,” was ranked slightly positive by both groups (+1). Statement 48, “advisement from those associated with this early college,” was ranked neutral or 0 by both groups.

The difference between the placement of Factor 1 and Factor 2 groups was at least four columns apart for ten (10) statements. Statement 43, “close friends support,” was the most disagreed upon statement with a difference of eight positions. Next was statement 18, “my friends were participating,” which had difference of seven positions. Table 4.11 shows the ten (10) statements with the greatest factor distance between the two groups.

Table 4.11. Differing Statements Between Factors One and Two.

No.	Statement	Factor 1 values	Factor 2 values
2	High school classes were boring.	-2	3
6	To earn high school and college credit.	6	2
10	Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.	1	-4
18	My friends were participating.	-4	3
32	It would help me mature.	2	-3
34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	-1	5
37	To fulfill my parents’ expectations.	2	6
43	Close friends support.	-3	5
45	To be better prepared for college.	4	0
46	EC peers’ support.	-2	2

Defining statements. The Q sort automated programs, R Software with the Q Methodology module and PQMethod, provide a report that identifies distinguishing and consensus statements. According to Bartlett II & DeWeese (2015), “when examining the arrays,

the research is able to determine which statements are different between the factors and which statements are similar,” (p. 80). The statements that are different between the factors are identified as distinguishing, and those that are similar are identified as consensus.

Distinguishing statements are those statements that are ranked significantly different on one factor compared to how they are ranked on the other factor(s). According to Brown (1993), “differences of 2 between factor scores can be considered significant” (p. 120). Bartlett II & DeWeese (2015) add that “the distinguishing statements are different based on the ranking scale; however, if the factor is more than 2 units apart, it is typically examined” (p. 82). Distinguishing statements tend to be statistically significant to a factor. Table 4.12 contains the distinguishing statements for the two factors in this study.

Table 4.12. Distinguishing Statements.

No.	Statement	Factor 1 values	Factor 2 values	Factor 1/ Factor 2 comparison Z-score	Significance
1	Wanted more academic rigor.	-1	2	-1.1295	**
2	High school classes were boring.	-2	3	-1.9827	**
4	To get college credit for free.	5	4	0.7161	*
6	To earn high school and college credit.	6	2	1.2285	**
7	To earn an associate degree.	5	4	0.9186	**
8	Attend classes with more mature students.	0	-2	0.7591	*
10	Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.	1	-4	1.6923	**
16	It felt good to be recommended.	2	4	-0.9602	**
18	My friends were participating.	-4	3	-2.1396	**
21	For the older women.	-5	-6	0.8508	*
25	Graduating from high school and college at the same time.	4	2	1.0527	**

Table 4.12. (continued).

27	Felt this was my only opportunity for college.	-3	-2	-0.6674	*
28	My family could not afford college.	0	3	-1.0644	**
30	Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.	3	1	1.1180	**
32	It would help me mature.	2	-3	1.5429	**
34	No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.	-1	5	-2.0605	**
37	To fulfill my parents' expectations.	2	6	-1.8399	**
40	Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.	2	0	0.7069	*
41	In spite of high school counselor's discouragement.	-2	-5	1.0211	**
43	Close friends support.	-3	5	-3.0941	**
44	See my pathway to a four-year degree.	3	0	1.1431	**
45	To be better prepared for college.	4	0	1.8654	**
46	EC peers support.	-2	2	-1.7338	**
49	High school administration and staff support.	-1	1	-0.7713	*

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Consensus statements are “statements that are not statistically different between factors (Ellingsen et al., 2010, p. 402). Consensus statements tend to be ranked similarly across factors, and they illustrate how to identify and understand the shared beliefs among all of the study’s participants. Table 4.13 contains the consensus statements for the two factor groups of this study.

Table 4.13. Consensus Statements.

No.	Statement	Factor 1/Factor 2 comparison Z-scores
3	Complete high school quicker.	-0.3741
5	Thought I would get more freedom.	0.3757
9	My family’s support.	0.4926

Table 4.13. (continued).

11	To make new friends.	0.3224
12	My parents made me.	-0.0489
13	Support of high school peers not in the EC.	0.0516
14	Single-gender education intrigued me.	-0.2139
15	To get away from the high school crowd.	-0.0840
17	Cool thing to be part of.	0.5285
19	Expectations were clearly communicated.	0.4192
20	Wasn't treated fair at the high school.	0.2366
22	To meet some different girls.	-0.2065
23	Because of its prestige.	0.3530
24	In spite of high school teachers' discouragement.	0.5003
26	College degree will help me financially and socially.	0.4239
29	Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.	-0.2640
31	Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.	0.4800
33	Program would help me learn to focus.	0.4016
35	Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.	0.4573
36	EC students hold each other to high expectations.	-0.2254
38	In spite of my parents' expectations.	0.0812
39	EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.	0.0249
42	Neighborhood support.	-0.2528
47	I like a challenge.	-0.5307
48	Advisement from those associated with this early college.	-0.1205

Interpretation

This research study identified two factors that define the viewpoints of the ten all-male early college participants of the 2013 cohort (graduating class of 2017) and the all-male early college participants of the 2014 cohort (graduating class of 2018) that participated in the Q sort activities of this study. The participants that make up Factor 1 are “*All About Education,*” and the participants that make up Factor 2 are all about “*Family, Friends, and Freedom.*”

Factor 1, *“All About Education,”* includes seven participants whose highest ranked reasons for choosing to participate in the all-male early college were (1) to earn high school and college credit, (2) to earn an associate degree, (3) to get college credit for free, (4) opportunity to graduate from high school and college at the same time, (5) to be better prepared for college, and (6) a college degree will help me financially and socially. One participant said, “I felt that earning college credit while in high school is a good opportunity because not only would I be getting ahead, I would also be prepared for the college classroom when I further my education.” Another participant stated “the prospect of getting free college was very appealing. I know how expensive college would be and everyone let me know so, I felt it would be important to take this opportunity.” That same sentiment was echoed by a participant who said, “money helps everything, but when it’s free you can’t turn it down. Also, coming from a family that isn’t running over with money I knew this would just make things a lot easier in the long run.”

Factor 2, *“Family, Friends, and Freedom,”* consists of three participants whose highest ranked reasons for choosing to participate in the all-male early college were (1) to fulfill my parents’ expectations, (2) close friends support, (3) no teachers or principals looking over your shoulders, (4) it felt good to be recommended (5) to get college credit for free, and (6) to earn an associate degree. When asked why he rated Statement 37, “to fulfill my parents’ expectations,” +6, one participant said, “I live with just my Mom, in a poor situation, when I was recommended for this program. I knew she wanted me to go to college, but I wasn’t making any progress towards it. This program was the opened door.” Another participant said he rated it a +6 because, “my parents expect me to do great things because my parents made me and taught me right.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the data collected from ten early-college graduates who were members of the first two cohorts of a recently established all-male early college. These young men were asked to think back to the beginning, when they were eighth graders trying to decide whether or not to participate in this new, untested, unproven adventure of an all-male early college program or attend the high school their brothers and/or sisters and, in some cases, mothers and/or fathers attended. They were asked to reflect on the reasons they chose to participate and also identify and rank those reasons from least to most influential that impacted their decision to participate, by sorting a group of statements related to the early college. Q sorts, including post-sort questions and interviews, were conducted to explore these participant's viewpoints.

To assist with the analysis, the Q sorts were entered into the R Software with Q Methodology module and the PQMethod statistical programs. Both programs identified a two-factor solution as being best for explaining why these participants chose to be part of the all-male early college. Results indicated that the two-factor solution was also the only solution, in which all participants loaded to a factor.

Factor 1 includes the young men who are "*All About Education*," while the Factor 2 group was influenced more by "*Family, Friends, and Freedom*."

Factor 1 is "*All About Education*," because the young men whose Q sorts loaded to this factor chose to participate in the all-male early college for reasons focused on the education or the results of the education they would be provided. They chose statements such as "to earn high school and college credit," "to earn an associate degree," and "to get college credit for free," as

having had the most influence/impact on their decision to participate in the early college experience.

Factor 2 is “*Family, Friends, and Freedom*,” because the young men whose Q sorts loaded to this factor chose to participate in the all-male early college for reasons focused on family expectations, friends’ support, and the perceived freedoms of the college environment. They chose statements such as “to fulfill my parents’ expectations,” “close friends support,” and “no teachers or principals looking over your shoulders” as having had the most influence/impact on their decision to participate in the all-male early college.

Reflecting on various points five and six years prior to this study, as eighth graders, these young men were offered an opportunity to participate in a new venture, the first early college in the upper part of this southeastern state and the only known all-male early college in the nation. They had to decide whether to go to their traditional high school or participate in this new educational avenue, one that would draw them away from the traditional high school environment half a day for the first two years and a full day for the last two years of this journey. These gentlemen had a lot to consider in making their decision. One group made decisions based on their perceptions of the benefits of the education. The other group was influenced by the educational opportunities also; however, their primary reasons to participate were the support, expectations, and freedom of a new situation. The next chapter explores these results, using the theory of planned behavior, addresses the implications of this study, and looks at the possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

This study was designed to be the beginning and foundation of what will, hopefully, be multiple research ventures into the all-male early college phenomenon. Although early colleges are not new, this early college is unique because of its students and its structure. First, the students are all males. An all-male middle college was established through a collaboration between North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T) and Guilford County Schools in North Carolina. However, middle colleges differ from early colleges in that middle college high schools,

“are designed to help potential dropouts succeed at high school and go on to higher education or advanced training. They admit students who have been identified by their counselors and teachers as at-risk students with the potential for eventual college studies.” (Cunningham & Wagonlander, 2000, p. 41)

Olsen (2010) echoes this explanation of the middle college by stating that “middle colleges are alternatives to traditional high school that seek to blend the high school experience with college to replace student failure with student success” (p. 664). And, these alternatives not only promote high school success but also promote “college enrollment for students who are disadvantaged and disenfranchised from traditional high schools” (p. 664).

Early college high schools are small, self-directed schools designed to increase the number of students who graduate from high school and are prepared for the journey into higher education. They are designed to offer higher education opportunities to students generally viewed as underrepresented or underserved (i.e., minorities, first generation college goers, socioeconomically disadvantaged, etc.) and not at-risk students. Early colleges are often located

on the campus of the partnering institution of higher education, and the goal is to produce high school graduates who may have also obtained up to two years of college, an associate degree.

Another reason this all-male early college is unique is because its participants attend their traditional high school to take part in high school classes during the first half of each school day during their freshman and sophomore years; then, they go to the college campus the second half of each school day to take part in college related instruction. During their junior and senior years, they attend class on the college campus all day, like other traditional early colleges. Additionally, this early college was also the first early college in the upstate region of this southeastern state. So, how are participants selected for this program?

The potential attendees are eighth grade males who attend middle schools in one particular upstate school district; meet a set of requirements established by the school district which include, but are not limited to, good passing grades and good attendance records; display a concern for education and a desire to attend college; would be the first in their family to attend college (a first-generation college goer); and come from a family without the means (socio-economic) to pay for the student to attend college. The young men meeting these requirements are screened, recommended for participation by a teacher(s) or counselor(s) for the program, interviewed along with their parent(s)/guardian(s), and, if determined to be a candidate, are offered an opportunity to choose whether or not to participate.

After being asked to consider conducting a study of this early college, the researcher delved into the literature and found a great deal of information related to early college but none addressing all-male early colleges and none that focused on the perspective of male students in early colleges. The researcher examined the single-gender education literature for information pertaining to male-only programs or courses or information related to the perspective of males in

male-only educational situations to no avail. In fact, the literature concerning single-gender education at the secondary education level was quite mixed – some for and some against. In 1992, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) produced a report which found that in a coeducational environment: (1) girls lag behind boys in mathematics and science; (2) girls behave passively and are “silenced” in the classroom while boys actively and are encouraged to participate; and (3) during their adolescent years, girls’ self-esteem tends to decline while boys’ self-esteem rises, Cerven (2002). Cerven (2002) goes on to mention that the “report became the impetus for reform in elementary and secondary education and public schools” (para. II), in several states which soon after began to create single-gender classes or all-girl schools. The decision to establish this all-male early college was not without its criticisms and skepticism; for example, when this endeavor was announced in the local newspaper, several people commented. They raised questions, such as, why is it male only? And, they posited how this was discriminatory and that separate was not equal. The school district heard the criticism, made its case, and determined that this project would move forward.

The perspective of single-gender environments in higher education is less divided. In fact, there are several female-only or predominately female institutions, such as Bennett College in North Carolina, Smith College in Massachusetts, Cottey College in Missouri, College of Saint Mary in Nebraska, and Scripps College in California, among others, whereas, there are only four male-only higher education institutions left in the United States. They are Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, Morehouse College in Georgia, Wabash College in Indiana, and Saint John’s University in Minnesota, which is a partner of the nearby all-female College of Saint Benedict. Since the integration of the military colleges, the last being Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in 1997, there is no record of a legal challenge to all-male higher education institutions.

With this all-male early college positioned in both the higher education and the secondary education worlds, they must navigate multiple perspectives of single-gender education.

When asking potential participants to choose to be a part of this journey, the early college has to consider the impact that others may have on their decision. As stated earlier, these potential participants are eighth graders who have come to the phase in their educational trek where they are now ready to be high schoolers. They are at that place where high school activities, such as pep rallies, and sporting events like football and basketball games, track meets, and the like are a big deal. They are at that place where friends, girlfriends, the prom, and being a big man on campus is what they have waited for eight years to experience. So, how do these events, friends, girlfriends, family, and others influence the decision to participate – or not participate? Darenbourg & Blake (2014) and Woodcock & Olson Beal (2013) note that peer influence is most prevalent during middle school and undergraduate years. The young men in this study choose to participate as middle schoolers and become undergrads. The peer influence – was it pressure or support?

The goal of this phase was to investigate why the participants of the first two cohorts of a recently established all-male early college chose to take part in this new experience. To identify “the why,” this study used Q methodology to gain the perspective of the participants and answer the research question, what are the highest and lowest rated factors for the all-male early college participants of the 2013 cohort (graduating class of 2017) and the all-male early college participants of the 2014 cohort (graduating class of 2018) that influenced them to participate in this early-college? Q methodology is a mixed methods research technique that systematically explores an individual’s viewpoint or preference through that individual’s sorting and ordering/ranking of statements or objects. Bartlett II & DeWeese (2015) noted that “the primary

goal of Q methodology is to uncover how and why people think the way they do (Brown 1993)” (p. 73). In this study, Q methodology was used to uncover the factors that influenced the decisions of these young men to choose to participate in this all-male early college.

Q-sorts and qualitative data, captured from post-sort questions and interviews, were gathered from the participants to address their decisions to participate in the all-male early college. Thirty-eight (38) of the forty (40) early college participants from the first two cohorts were eligible to participate in the study; two (2) of the forty (40) were younger than eighteen years of age at the time the Q sorts were being administered and were, thus not qualified to participate. Of the (38) thirty-eight potential participants, one was unreachable because he is currently serving in the United States military and is stationed out of the country; one requested the survey electronically, but it was not completed and submitted; four, all non-graduates of the early college, declined the invitation to participate; eleven were unreachable due to no answer, wrong numbers, not active voicemail and never answered calls, or calls could not be completed; ten were either contacted but would not commit or were left voicemails and did not return the calls; one had agreed to meet on multiple occasions but, incidents caused cancellations. Of the thirty-eight (38) possible participants, twenty-three (23) graduated from the early college. Of the thirty-eight (38) possible participants, ten (10) participated in this study. The ten (10) participants in this study are all graduates of the all-male early college; seven (7) are members of the 2013 cohort; and three (3) are members of the 2014 cohort. The Q-sorts were conducted in a face-to-face environment. Post-sort questions were answered at the time of the sort; and the participants talked to the researcher about the sort and the early college, in general. One of the questions asked of each participant of interest to the early college staff was, “If there was one thing you could now change about the early college or inform the staff about, what would that

be?” Another question was “If you had it to do all over again, would you choose to participate in this early college?” The Q-set contained forty-nine (49) statements. Additional questions related to the factored results were posed to select participants from each factor to provide additional information/clarification of their choices.

Since the answers to the research question are the result of the participants’ choices, which reflect their perspective of what influenced them to participate in the early college, the researcher used the theory of planned behavior to frame the study. The theory of planned behavior will be overlaid with the study’s results later in this chapter.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to find out what led the participants of the first two cohorts, 2013 and 2014, of a new all-male early college to choose to be a part of this new educational experience. The participants in the 2013 cohort had no one before them, no one from which to glean any information about early college. And, at the time the potential 2014 cohort participants were making their decision to participate or not, the 2013 cohort was of little, if any, help since they were still new to this experience because they were only freshman. After the sorts were conducted, the sort data was entered into R Software with Q Methodology module and PQMethod for analysis. A correlation matrix was developed, and factors were rotated as part of the factor analysis. The unrotated factors showed that a two-factor solution was appropriate for this study because there were only two factors that had eigenvalues over 1.0. The factor loads show how each Q sort correlates with each factor. The results of the loadings identified the significant loads for each factor, if any.

In this study, all ten participants loaded significantly on one of the factors. Seven participants loaded significantly to Factor 1, while three loaded significantly to Factor 2. Five

members of the 2013 cohort are part of the Factor 1 group, along with two members of the 2014 cohort. The Factor 2 group includes two members of the 2013 cohort and one member of the 2014 cohort. There are distinguishing characteristics associated with each factor group, as well as similarities across groups, which will be explored next.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Factor 1. “*All About Education.*” The young men whose Q sorts loaded to this factor chose to participate in the all-male early college for reasons focused on the education or the results of the education they would be provided. They chose statements such as “to earn high school and college credit,” “to get college credit for free,” and “to earn an associate degree” as having the most influence/impact on their decision to participate in the early college experience. Notably, ninety percent, nine out of ten, of this group’s top factors that impacted/influenced their decision to participate in the all-male early college were related to reasons for acquiring the education being offered. Additional statements included a pathway to a four-year degree, opportunity was worth the amount of work, and a college degree would help financially and socially. The one statement this group had in its top ten not related to the education or the benefits of obtaining the education was family support which came in at number nine.

Factor 2. “*Family, Friends, and Freedom.*” The young men whose Q sorts loaded to this factor chose to participate in the all-male early college for reasons focused on family expectations, friends’ support, and the perceived freedoms of the college environment. They chose statements such as “to fulfill my parents’ expectations,” “close friends support,” and “no teachers or principals looking over your shoulders” as having the most influence/impact on their decision to participate in the all-male early college. In this group’s top ten factors they also included statements such as “my friends were participating” in the early college, “high school

classes were boring,” and “my family could not afford college” to support their mantra. They also recognized the education benefits by including getting college credit for free, “to earn an associate degree,” and a “college degree will help me financially and socially” in their top ten.

Similar Characteristics

Both groups included the educational benefits of receiving free college credit and earning an associate degree in their list of top ten reasons for participating. When asked post sort and post analysis about the ability to earn an associate degree and free college credit, the participants conveyed that those things may not have been at the forefront but they were at least in the back of their minds because “how often does someone get offered free education?” Also, the thought of graduating high school with a two-year college degree was very appealing. Of little or no concern to both groups was meeting different girls or older women. As a note, six of the seven 2013 cohort participants recalled the statements referring to attending the all-male early college because it gave them an opportunity to meet new girls and older women, being made during a couple of the conversations with the researcher. Most of them recalled the students who had made those statements, and when asked about those individuals’ status, they noted that those individuals did not complete the early college program and were out of the program around their junior year. Both groups noted that the information they received about the early college had no impact on their confidence that they could succeed. When asked, the post analysis interviewees said that they never had doubts about succeeding in the early college (EC) environment; however, some questioned whether they wanted to remain an EC student. Similarly, both groups rated the advisement they received from those associated with the early college as neutral. They stated that the early college staff is great and that they play a tremendous role in their success as

EC students and graduates. But, at the time they were deciding to participate, the information they received from those individuals had no impact positively or negatively.

Findings and the Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory underpinning this study is the theory of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior was developed by Icek Ajzen to help explain and even predict human behavior in particular situations (Ajzen, 1991). The basic premise of the theory is that one's behavior is determined by one's intention to perform the behavior. And, that intention is determined by three conceptually independent constructs: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

Attitude toward the behavior. Attitude toward the behavior refers to one's favorable or unfavorable assessment of the behavior in question. The more positive the attitude, the stronger the intention to engage in the behavior.

The sort statements in this study that lend themselves to a participant viewing them as favorable or unfavorable and potentially influencing his decision to participate in the all-male early college are:

1. Wanted more academic rigor.
2. High school classes were boring.
3. Complete high school quicker.
4. To get college credit for free.
6. To earn high school and college credit.
7. To earn an associate degree.
8. Attend classes with more mature students.
10. Experience the close-knit environment of the EC.
11. To make new friends.
14. Single-gender education intrigued me.

15. To get away from the high school crowd.
16. It felt good to be recommended.
17. Cool thing to be part of.
18. My friends were participating.
19. Expectations were clearly communicated.
20. Wasn't treated fair at the high school.
21. For the older women.
22. To meet some different girls.
23. Because of its prestige.
25. Graduating from high school and college at the same time.
26. College degree will help me financially and socially.
27. Felt this was my only opportunity for college.
28. My family could not afford college.
29. Opportunity outweighed leaving friends at old high school.
30. Despite the amount of work the opportunity would be worth it.
31. Opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities.
35. Opportunity outweighed the additional time needed for studying.
44. See my pathway to a four-year degree.
45. To be better prepared for college.
48. Advisement from those associated with this early college.

Subjective norm. Subjective norm refers to the social pressure one perceives to have encountered from individuals who are important to her/him (important others) in reference to performing or not performing the behavior. The stronger the perceived social pressure, the greater the intention to perform the behavior in question.

The sort statements in this study that reflect the influence/impact others may have had on a participant's decision to participate in the all-male early college are:

9. My family's support.

12. My parents made me.
13. Support of high school peers not in the EC.
24. In spite of high school teachers' discouragement.
36. EC students hold each other to high expectations.
37. To fulfill my parents' expectations.
38. In spite of my parents' expectations.
40. Information I was given about EC gave me confidence I could succeed.
41. In spite of high school counselor's discouragement,
42. Neighborhood support.
43. Close friends support.
46. EC peers support.
49. High school administration and staff support.

Perceived behavioral control. "Perceived behavioral control refers to one's perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). The greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger the intention to perform a given behavior.

The sort statements in this study in which a participant may have perceived control viewing the ability to control his performance or effort to achieve his desired end are:

5. Thought I would get more freedom.
32. It would help me mature.
33. Program would help me learn to focus.
34. No teachers or principals looking over your shoulders.
39. EC gave me a sense of purpose and this offered me purpose.
47. I like a challenge.

Factor 1. "All About Education." The "*All About Education*" group's top three statements belonged to the theory of planned behavior's attitude toward the behavior construct.

The statements “to earn high school and college credit” (+6), “to earn an associate degree” (+5), and “to get college credit for free” (+5) are behaviors viewed so favorably by the individuals in this group that they had the most influence on their decision to choose to participate in the all-male early college. Of this group’s top ten statements, the top eight belonged in the theory’s attitude toward the behavior construct. Overall, thirteen statements in the attitude toward the behavior construct, three in the subjective norm construct, and five in the perceived behavioral control construct made up the positive selections of the group’s sort.

The theory of planned behavior’s attitude toward the behavior construct expresses the positive or negative evaluation of performing a given behavior (Godin & Kok, 1996). This group determined that graduating from high school with an associate degree, receiving free college credits, graduating high school and being better prepared for college, and getting a jump start on a four-year degree were positive possibilities that influenced their decisions to participate in the all-male early college. Their focus was on education. They assessed the behaviors, and their attitude toward those behaviors impacted their decision. It appears that the attitude toward taking advantage of the educational opportunities that lay before them was summed up in the name, “*All About Education.*”

Factor 2. “*Family, Friends, and Freedom.*” The “*Family, Friends, and Freedom*” group’s top three statements contained two statements that belong to the subjective norm construct and one statement that belongs to the perceived behavioral control construct. The statements “to fulfill my parents’ expectations” (+6) and “close friends support” (+5) are indicative of social aspects and importance of others which the subjective norm construct represents. Just the term, “expectation,” can bring a sense of pressure and the importance of the support or lack of support from others can provide a degree of pressure as one does not want to

disappoint or let down those providing that support. The statement, “no teachers or principals looking over your shoulders” (+5), may have allowed a sense of control (perceived control) even though assessing the possibility of not experiencing such actions could have just as easily been classified as an attitude toward the behavior, depending on how one sees it. In a follow-up conversation with a member of this factor, that participant viewed it as hoping to have some control, to not feel like every movement is being scrutinized or judged. Of this group’s top ten statements, seven belonged to the attitude toward the behavior construct; however, their influence ranked fourth to tenth. Overall, twelve statements in the attitude toward the behavior construct, five in the subjective norm construct, and four in the perceived behavioral control construct made up the positive selections of this group’s sort.

“*Family, Friends, and Freedom*,” is quite a fitting name for this group, wouldn’t you agree? Family and friends speak to the theory’s subjective norm construct. The influence family and friends have on the decision-making process or reason for making a decision can be undeniable. The pressure or support one feels from family and friends can never be understated in decision-making. Freedom, to be free, expresses a desire to be in control (perceived behavioral control). A look at the what the factors have in common is next.

Factors 1 and 2 commons. Although the “*All About Education*” and “*Family, Friends, and Freedom*” groups’ most influential reasons for participating in the all-male early college were different, the two groups had more in common than they had differences. The “*Family, Friends, and Freedom*” group had eight of the “*All About Education*” top ten reasons in the positive side of its sort. In return, “*All About Education*” had six of the “*Family, Friends, and Freedom’s*” top ten reasons in the positive side of its sort. The two groups had twelve positive side statements, twelve negative side statements, and two neutral statements in common.

In addition, the two groups had twenty-five consensus statements between their sorts. Consensus statements are “statements that are not statistically different between factors” (Ellingsen et al., 2010, p. 402). Consensus statements tend to be ranked similarly across factors, and they lend themselves to identifying and understanding the shared beliefs among all the study’s participants.

During the post-sort and post-analysis interviews, the participants reflected upon a few additional items that warrant addressing. Statement 31 of the Q-Set states the, “opportunity outweighed my need to participate in outside activities; “*All About Education*” rated it (+1), while “*Family, Friends, and Freedom*” rated it (-1). However, several participants noted that at the time they were contemplating their decision to participate in the all-male early college, they may have considered, a little, the possibility of missing out on activities happening at the high school, such as participating in club activities, some non-major sports, pep rallies, band, ROTC or student government, to name a few. Not being able to participate in those events caused some of them to question their decision to become an early college student. Others suggest that the early college and high school administrations figure out a way to keep the early college students engaged in high school activities, especially during their junior and senior years. They recommend that all potential participants be informed, in detail, of the high school activities in which they will not be able to participate so they will know what they are giving up. One participant stated that at the high school graduation he overheard some of his fellow graduates ask, “Who were these guys graduating with them?” They were referring to the early college students because, unless they were popular prior to attending early college or played one of the major sports (baseball, basketball, or football), they may not have been seen by or had contact with many of their high school classmates for at least two years.

They also raised the issue of not being treated like college students early on in the journey. And, with regard to participating in developmental/reinforcement type classes, they felt they did not need them prior to being able to start their college credit curriculum courses. They felt they had surpassed that threshold in their middle school studies. These are areas that can be considered during the next iteration of this study.

Limitations

Since this is the only all-male early college, no literature exists to compare or contrast this topic. Only ten (10) of thirty-eight (38) possible participants chose to participate in this study, and all ten (10) were early college graduates. Because no non-early college graduates participated in the study, the results may not be generalizable to all of the all-male early college participants. However, the results may be generalizable to the all-male early college completers because, as Brown (1980) noted, the study's results can be generalized to that population if there are "enough subjects to establish the existence of a factor for the purpose of comparing one factor to another" (p. 192). And, this study has two factors: the "*All About Education*" and the "*Family, Friends, and Freedom.*" Additionally, because the focus of this study is an all-male early college and its participants, the results may not be generalizable to all potential early college students. This is a retrospective study, one that asked the completers to recall why they chose to participate in this all-male early college. Gathering the reasons why a student chose to participate at the time the decision is made or soon thereafter is preferable.

Implications for Practice

The study resulted in implications for practice which have the potential to impact not only this study's all-male early college administration team but also others who wish to establish

and all-male early college. Those implications will be discussed in this section. However, first a brief recap of an expanded theory of planned behavior model is presented.

Ajzen’s update of the theory of planned behavior model in 2006 addressed what he called behavioral predecessors or the preceding beliefs that impact each behavior. According to this update of the theory, he added that human behavior is guided by beliefs, and that each construct in the theory has its own preceding belief. Figure 5.1 is a graphic representation of Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior with preceding beliefs.

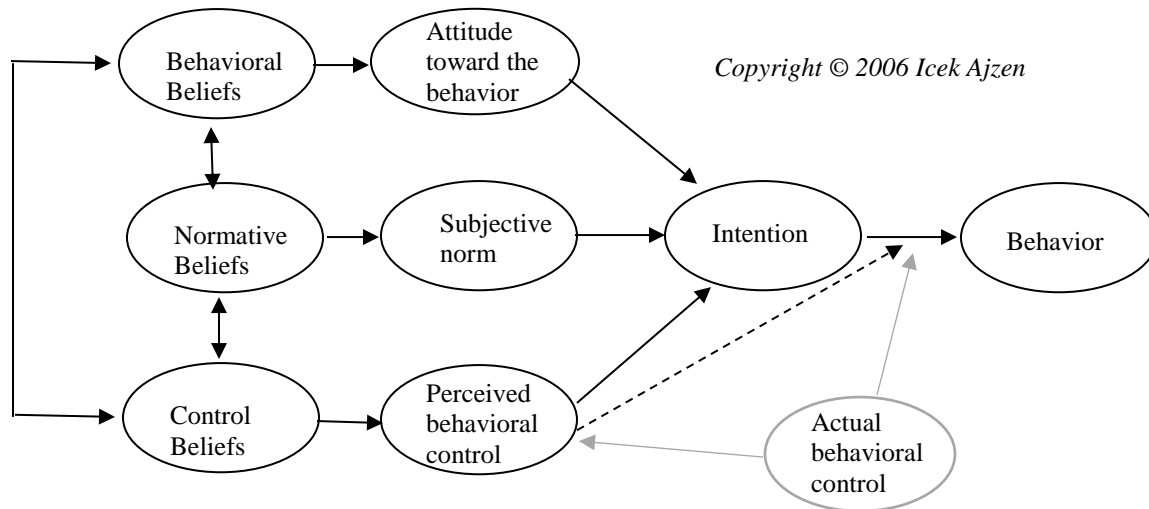


Figure 5.1. “Theory of planned behavior,” (Ajzen, 2010, p.1).

According to Ajzen (2010), behavioral beliefs are “beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behavior and the evaluations of these outcomes” (p.1); they produce a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behavior construct. Normative beliefs are “beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations” (p.1); they result in perceived social pressure (subjective norm construct). Control beliefs are “beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior and the perceived power of these factors” (p.1); they give rise to perceived behavioral control. The implications of knowing and understanding that if one can capture information related to either

the behavioral construct or the belief during the application or interview processes, one may be able to predict if the potential participant will choose to attend and, if so, if he will be successful.

Current all-male early college. For the all-male early college team, knowing that the factors that influenced former successful early college graduates included those statements that were “*All About Education*” or focused on “*Family, Friends, and Freedom*” could assist them in their recruiting and selection efforts. Knowing what influenced the successful and unsuccessful participants to choose to participate in this all-male early college could provide team members insight when they encounter potential students with the same motivations.

Future all-male early colleges. For future all-male early colleges, consider the statements that this study’s all-male early college completers had in common. First, the statements that they agreed positively impacted their decision to participate included to get college credit for free, to earn an associate degree, a college degree will help me financially and socially, to fulfill my parents’ expectations, it felt good to be recommended, to earn high school and college credit, and graduating from high school and college at the same time. They confirmed their choices in their individual statements. For example, one study participant stated, “Earning a degree by age 18 put me ahead in life and helped save a lot of money.” Another stated he chose to participate in the program because it afforded him the opportunity to “get credit for free and save my parents some money.” One young man’s main reason for participating was, as he stated, “My family expects so much of me. They want me to succeed and to be an example for my older siblings. My family wants me to do great things.” Another said, “I was recommended for this program, surprisingly around four or five teachers and a counselor recommended me. I guess they saw my potential despite the hardships I’ve faced.” And, one young man simply noted that the main reasons for him joining the early college were

the chance to graduate from high school and college at the same time, to earn an associate degree, to earn high school and college credit, and to get college credit for free.

Next, the statements they agreed upon as least impactful on their decision to participate in this early college included those related to meeting different girls or the older women, feeling the need to get away from the high school crowd or feeling as though one were not being treated fairly in high school, or being made to choose to participate by one's parent(s). The main statement echoed by the young men, focusing on the least impactful reasons they chose to participate, was the idea of getting to know other females. One study participant stated, "I wasn't worried about women especially other women." Another noted, "I like girls my age." While another expressed, "I did not choose to attend the early college for the chance to meet women. Meeting the older female students of the college was the least of my concerns."

Overlaying the information above with the theory of planned behavior, which underpinned this study, one can see how the constructs (their chosen statements and individual statements) determined their intentions (choice to participate in the all-male early college) which led to their performance of the behavior (choosing to participate in the all-male early college). The statements they selected during the sort activity and the individual statements they provided expressed a positive attitude toward the behavior in question construct. And, based on the theory, a positive attitude toward a behavior tends to determine the intention to perform that behavior. By the same token, since the study's participants also expressed family expectations as a positive factor for choosing to participate in the all-male early college, then, the theory's subjective norm construct was also a determinant of their intention to perform the behavior.

As shown above, Ajzen updated the theory of planned behavior in 2006 adding the notion of preceding beliefs to help the theory explain human behavior. The addition suggested that

human behavior is guided by beliefs and that each construct in the theory has its own preceding belief. Consider the following statements from some of the study's participants. Regarding attending college, one participant expressed the following, "I was going to college regardless of the program. This was just a boost to help along the process." Another proclaimed, "College was always a part of my future so anything that would help me or give me an edge I was trying to get it." Another young man talked about living in a poor situation with just his mom, who wanted him to go to college, but he wasn't making any progress in that direction; however, this program provided the means to do so. And yet another study participant said, "I knew how expensive college could be and everyone let me know so, I felt it would be important to take this opportunity." The first two statements are examples of behavioral beliefs, predecessors of attitude toward the behavior constructs, and the last two suggest normative beliefs, predecessors of subjective norm constructs. The theory of planned behavior not only explains human behavior but also helps predict it.

Using this information, future all-male early colleges or those researching all-male early college opportunities should establish a means to gather potential participants' intention to perform the desired behavior to help predict who is most likely to perform the desired behavior. This and other recommendations are addressed in the following section.

Recommendations for Practice

At the current all-male early college, the all-male early college team should discuss with teachers and guidance counselors, who are tasked with assessing and recommending students for possible participation in the early college program, the results of the research, providing them insight into the factors that previous completers attributed to their choosing to participate in the program. By the same token, for future all-male early colleges, those responsible for leading the

all-male early college effort should discuss with those responsible for recommending potential participants the results of the research, providing them insight into the factors that previous completers attributed to their choosing to participate in the program. Those responsible for selecting participants should also be trained to determine the potential participant's intention to perform the desired behavior. Potential participants should take part in the Q-Sort activity to identify their reasons for wanting to participate in an all-male early college. Additionally, potential participants' confidentiality must be assured and maintained.

Although it is often said, and may be true much of the time, that parents know best, if a potential participant is choosing to join the early college because he is being made to do so, it may not lead to the most desired outcome. By no means does this researcher suggest that the individual not be accepted; however, he may require a bit more attention or nurturing to be successful in the program. The support of parents, friends, family, and others has an impact on the potential participant's choices and success. Thus, it is important that the link between their support and the potential attendee's success be discussed with the family. This may also help garner their support for the program.

Another area of discussion should be the availability of and potential participation in activities such as high school athletics, pep rallies, student government, clubs, and other extracurricular activities. A study participant said, "Although the early college had its advantages, it also had its disadvantages, being away from the high school crowd as far as missing certain events on particular days and it also kept me from seeing other friends." Another young man maintained that they should have been asked upfront about the extracurricular activities they take part in. He noted it was not an issue for him but, "for someone who aspired

to participate in student government, clubs, or sports it may be an important reason that influence their decision.”

If an all-male early college program is recruiting participants or conducting a marketing campaign, the positive opportunities that have been expressed by this study’s participants should be accentuated. The opportunity to accumulate up to two years of college credit, while still in high school, the opportunity to graduate high school with an associate’s degree, the opportunity to enter a four-year college or university directly out of high school as a junior, which at eighteen or nineteen years of age, could lead to obtaining a bachelor’s degree by age 20, a master’s by age 22, and a Ph.D. by age 25, should be emphasized. The financial advantages of receiving two years of tuition-free education, along with the financial advantage of obtaining higher education degrees, should be expressed. Another point of discussion that should be held with the potential participant and his family is the money that will be saved by participating and receiving up to two years of college education free.

Recommendations for Future Research

As stated at the beginning of the study, the hope is that this is only the first foray into the depth and breadth of this all-male early college phenomenon. This is the beginning, a study assessing why the participants chose to participate in the all-male early college. It would appear that the next phase would be to assess their persistence, possibly exploring the factors that influenced the participants to persist. A third phase can research their successes, the completion of high school and of the early college with varying amounts of college credit possibly exploring the factors that influenced them to complete the early college program. Additional research can document their path to a four-year degree, jobs acquired, or whatever the researcher deems is appropriate for the respective study.

Chapter Summary

In this final chapter, the study was discussed, a summary of the findings was presented, the relationship of the findings and the conceptual framework were explored, limitations and implications were identified, and recommendations for future research were discussed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out, from the graduates themselves, what led them to choose to participate in the all-male early college program. The program was new. No one could tell them what they were getting into, whether it was beneficial, what they might have to give up, how much work was involved, how they would be viewed, and so forth. For the gentlemen choosing to participate, it was a leap of faith. For the young men who participated in the study, the leap seems to have been worth it, even though the road had its ups and downs. They are fine young men with bright futures. They are continuing their education and seeking to be teachers, engineers, scientists, cyber security administrators, and to serve in a non-profit organization.

With respect to the study, I regret that no non-early college graduates participated because I believe to get a true or close to complete picture, we need the perspective of everyone involved. However, we have what we have: and, we know that part of what we have was influenced by their focus on getting their education, and the other part was influenced by the importance of others in their lives who they want to please.

For the researcher, conversations about the study mostly lead to questions about persistence, success, and completion. This is understandable, given that many open-door higher education institutions are seeing the completion agenda becoming a prime measure of their performance. This researcher hopes this work conveys that if we give some attention to the

beginning and pay attention to the factors that are important to a potential participant, like in this study, or an incoming student, in general, we may do a better job of serving and helping her or him be successful. While we can never ensure that all students are successful, if we can determine, like in this study, the key factors that influence successful all-male early college participants, then during the recruiting, interviewing, and assessment processes, we may be able to predict those that are bound for success. Thus, we may, then, be able to spend additional time and energy on those who may have the desire but are not predisposed to follow through or be successful. Again, this is the initial phase of completing the early college. Many things that happen along the way can impact completion; those will, hopefully, be studied also. But, again, the beginning must start somewhere; and this study is the where.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SORT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read through all 49 cards to become familiar with the statements.
2. As you read through the statements for a second time, organize them into three piles:
 - On the right, place the cards that you feel are most representative of the reason or that impacted your decision to participate in this all-male early college.
 - On the left, place the cards that are least representative.
 - In the middle, place the cards that are neutral to your decision.

Least

Neutral

Most

3. Beginning with the pile on the right, place the 1 card that you agree with the most in the +6 column.
4. Now, turning to your left side, place the 1 card that you disagree with the most in the -6 column.
5. Continue this process until all the cards are placed. You are free to change your mind during the sorting process and switch items around.
6. When completed, you should have the following number of cards under each marker:
 - You should have 1 card under markers +6 (most) and -6 (least).
 - You should have 2 cards under markers +5 and -5.
 - You should have 3 cards under markers +4 and -4.
 - You should have 4 cards under markers +3 and -3.
 - You should have 5 cards under markers +2 and -2.
 - You should have 6 cards under markers +1 and -1.
 - You should have 7 cards under marker 0 (neutral).

Appendix C

POST SORT QUESTIONS

1) Which card did you rate as a **+6** and why?

Card #: _____

Reason:

2) Which card did you rate as a **-6** and why?

Card #: _____

Reason:

3) Which cards, if any, did you find hardest to place and why?

Card #: _____

Reason:

4) Which cards, if any, had the most impact on your sorting and why?

Card #: _____

Reason:

- 5) Is there a statement that you would have liked to see in the sort? If so, what would the card have said and where would you have placed it?

Statement:

Placement: _____

Q-Sort Project Demographics

- ETHNICITY

- _____ African American
- _____ Caucasian
- _____ Hispanic/Latino
- _____ Middle Eastern
- _____ Native American
- _____ Asian
- _____ Other: _____

- EARLY COLLEGE COHORT:

- 2013 _____
- 2014 _____
 - Early College Graduate
 - Yes _____
 - No _____

Appendix D

North Carolina State University INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: All-Male Early College High School Success: The First Step, Choosing to Participate

Principal Investigator: James Jackson

Faculty Sponsor (if applicable)

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the viewpoints of graduates and soon to be graduates toward the decision to participate in the all-male early college high school and why. Specifically, you are being asked to consider your decision to participate in this program.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- a. Sort a group of statements regarding the factors that influenced your decision to participate in this early college high school in terms of most representative of the reason or that impacted your decision to participate in the early college, not representative of the reason or least impactful on your decision to participate, and neutral to your decision. Once sorted you will be asked to rank the most representative or impactful and the least representative or impactful factors' statements and place them on a grid that will be provided in the corresponding order of your ranking.
- b. Average sorting and ranking time 30-45 minutes.

Risks

Possible risk may be felt as you self-identify factors that influenced your decision to participate in the early college and when appropriate explaining why. In an attempt to minimize the risk your selections will be known only to you and the researcher. After your sort has been ranked and placed on the grid you will be provided, the researcher will record the data and combine it with the data of other participants. A pseudonym will be used for the name of the early college program. All identifying information will be kept securely in password, protected files on a flash drive or the researcher's home computer. Paper data will be kept securely in a locked box at the researcher's home.

Benefits

This research will hopefully add to the literature focused on early college high schools, single gender education, peer influence, and the theory of planned behavior. It will provide some students' perspectives to why they decide to participate. It will help this all-male early college and future all-male early colleges with recruiting and selecting participants. This study will be the first step in constructing a comprehensive picture of the type of student who will be successful in all-male early college high schools.

Confidentiality

The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely in the presence of the researcher (paper information at the researcher's home and digital data on a flash-drive and the researcher's home PC). No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to

the study, without your consent. You will NOT be asked to write your name on any study materials so that no one can match your identity to the answers that you provide, unless you consent to using your story as guidance or inspiration for others.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, James Jackson, at 674 Carolina Ridge Rd, Gaffney, SC 29341, via email at jjacks2@ncsu.edu or jjacksonjr@chesnet.net, or phone: 864.431.5455.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature _____

Date _____

Investigator's signature _____

Date _____