ABSTRACT

HALE, JORDAN C. The Role of the Coach in the Storied Experiences of Black Male College Student-Athletes. (Under the direction of Dr. Joy Gaston-Gayles).

This narrative study explored the relationship of coaches and Black male student-athletes seeking to understand the stories of Black male student-athletes, their relationship with their coaches, and the role of the coaches in their academic, athletic, and social identity development. Using narrative techniques, the author worked with three different university campuses to identify potential study participants. Seven students participated in this study and through semi-structured interviews, observations, and photo elicitation, data was collected exploring the research topic. Using qualitative data analysis software, four main themes emerged: Experience and Exploitation; Building Bonds Beyond Bondage: The Team as a Family; Rewriting the Narrative: Thriving Despite Existing in a Culture of Anti-Blackness; and Finding Their Voice. Each theme contained sub-themes to further provide detail of the student-athletes' experiences. From these themes, seven recommendations were provided including the family always being a positive support, pride in academic and athletic achievement, Holistic Athlete Identity Development (H.A.I.D.), crafting identity in an anti-Black environment, athletes as activists, being seen as more than an athlete and the coach as listener and the athlete as storyteller. Each of these findings either further explains or adds a new perspective to what is often shared in the literature.

The Role of the Coach in the Storied Experiences of Black Male College Student-Athletes

by
Jordan C. Hale

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APPROVED BY:

_____   _____
Dr. Joy Gaston-Gayles   Dr. Kathryn Titus-Becker
Committee Chair

_____   _____
Dr. Marc Grimmett   Dr. Audrey Jaeger

DEDICATION

To my wife- thank you for your patience. To my participants- thank you for your presence. To my family- thank you for your persistence. To my committee- thank you for your perseverance.

BIOGRAPHY

Jordan Hale was born in Tallahassee, Florida to John and Shirley Hale on June 20, 1984. Growing up in the shadows of both Florida A&M and Florida State University, Jordan decided to take his talents to Gainesville, Florida and attend the University of Florida. While in college, Jordan became an active participant in his fraternity (Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.), bible study (through Intervarsity Christian Fellowship), and university life (including serving as a preview Orientation Leader). While in college, Jordan met the love of his life, Tessa Benjamin and they were married in January of 2012. Upon completing his degree in history and economics, Jordan enrolled in the Master of Education Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2006. Jordan lived in Amherst for two years where he developed his love for learning and critical feedback. Upon graduating from UMass, Jordan was offered and accepted a job at Duke University in 2008. While at Duke, Jordan started to pursue his doctoral degree from North Carolina State University. While living in Durham, NC, Jordan and Tessa have started their lives together including having two children (Christian and Gabrielle), finding their church home and engaging with a loving community of support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Student-athletes must manage multiple identities and roles as they navigate campus life (Feltz et al., 2013; Huml, 2018). Research on student-athletes has highlighted their distinct athletic, academic, and social role identities (Cooper et al., 2017; Foster & Huml, 2018; Harrison, Jr., et al., 2017; Singer, 2016). For student-athletes who play a varsity sport, it is likely that their athletic role will take priority over their academic and social role if they do not receive intentional support and guidance (Rubin, 2016). For Black male student-athletes, the time dedicated to participating in athletics has a notable impact on the college experience (Bjornsen & Dinkel, 2017; Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

For student-athletes, practice, meals, and workouts are often overemphasized, while classes and study hall are not seen as important as athletics (Harper, 2016). Fountain and Finley (2011) examined college gameday programs and found that revenue generating programs tended to have academic clustering, allowing for student-athletes to have additional time to meet requirements outside of academic coursework. Despite the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulating workouts to 20 hours a week for athletics, many student-athletes exceed this time due to voluntary workouts, organized team activities, and additional film study. (Bimper et al., 2012; Rubin, 2016). Further supporting this perspective, Bjornsen and Dinkel (2017) explored the perspectives of athletic coaches and found they believed student-athletes needed more time to focus on their careers outside of sports.

Black males, who are overrepresented in revenue-generating college sports (Harper, 2012), must also navigate campus life through the lens of their Black identity without many role models within the athletic department who reflect their identity. Researchers who have studied the college experiences of Black males have highlighted how their experiences vary, specifically

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lower graduation rates, racism on campus, and lack of involvement in university life (Allen, 1992; Cuyjet, 2006; Flowers, 2004; Harper & Simmons, 2019; Johnson et al., 2019). Harper (2015) describes the college environment for Black males as hostile, noting that over a six-year period only one-third of Black men graduate college, a rate that is 15 percentage points lower that all other groups. Brooms (2018) also notes a lack of social integration, institutional support, and social isolation further impact Black males in college, which, the author notes, are all challenges that can be fixed with appropriate and available resources.

The academic performance of Black male-student-athletes participating in varsity athletics further highlights the difficult roles and responsibilities these individuals face in their daily experience. Black male student-athletes often to not develop relationships with faculty due to their athletic commitments (Comeaux, 2008; Comeaux, 2011). This leads to a lack of interest in post-graduate opportunities, academic stereotypes, and a lack of academic motivation (Comeaux, 2012; Harrison et al., 2015). Additional stereotyping from their peers and the need to prove their academic competence further creates a racially unwelcoming academic environment for Black male athletes (Harper, 2015).

More focused research on Black male student-athletes has centered around their experience as athletes, but few studies have concentrated on the role of the athletic coach in shaping their experiences. Athletic coaches are in a unique position to influence student-athletes' college experiences because of how much time they spend together on and off the playing field. However, their time together is generally concerned with the student-athletes' athletic role; thus, separating academic and athletic experiences is difficult. Through drawing attention to the role of the athletic coach in the experiences of Black male student-athletes, this study seeks to explore

and understand how the coach-athlete relationship can lead to more positive outcomes for collegiate Black male student-athletes.

The intersection of being a both a Black male athlete, managing the difficulties of time management due to coaches demands and navigating academic requirements creates additional pressure and racially challenging environments. Often, these student-athletes are forced to survive environments that over-emphasize athletic success and minimize academic achievement (Harper, 2015; Sato et al., 2018; Singer, 2016). Thus, student-athletes are often stereotyped and must manage microaggressions and racist behavior (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). Navigating athletics, academic, and social roles require proper support, particularly from individuals who play a major role in shaping their experience by virtue of the amount of time they spend in practice, athletic facilities, classrooms, and campus life. Interactions and experiences across all these domains shape their overall persistence and success.

The difficulty of balancing athletic, academic, and social roles and expectations warrants research on the coach-athlete relationships and how Black male athletes' identities are shaped, shifted, and transformed as a result of this relationship. The coach-athlete relationship is defined for the purpose of this study using the 3C model developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004). This model explores the coach-athlete relationship through the "closeness" of the coach-athlete relationship, the "commitment" to the relationship by both the coaches and athletes, and the "co-orientation" of coaches and athletes as their relationship develops. The knowledge generated from this study is expected to inform the development of inclusive practices and strategies to support Black male student-athletes experiences.

This chapter begins with the conceptual framework to provide the lens for conducting the study, followed by the background of the problem. Next, the chapter will provide the problem

statement with evidence from prior studies in similar bodies of research literature supporting the need to further explore this topic. The purpose statement and research questions are briefly highlighted, followed by the significance of the study which draws connections to potential beneficiaries of the work. The chapter concludes with the definition of key terms and a review of this chapter.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study is bounded by two foundational concepts in the literature, each rooted in the experiences of individuals as they navigate their place in society. The first is the Astin I-E-O model. Within this model, Astin (1991) sought to explore the college student experience through three components: 1) inputs, what students bring to college; 2) environment, what students experience while in college; and 3) outputs, what students take away from college. This theory emerged as a framework in subsequent literature about student-athletes (Comeaux, 2011; Comeaux & Harrison, 2007). Specifically related to Black male student-athletes, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) utilized the I-E-O framework to develop a model for understanding Black male student-athlete college experiences. The model used background characteristics (inputs), to describe how Black student-athletes conceptualized their academic identities and athletic identities (environment) to better understand how to assist Black student-athletes and their pursuits (outputs).

The other critical component to understanding this research study is the 3C model presented in the literature by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004). The 3C model centers on the coach-athlete relationship and explores it through three aspects: 1) closeness, or how interconnected are coaches and athletes; 2) commitment, or the level of dedication to developing a relationship; and 3) co-orientation, or the values shared by both coaches and athletes. Researchers have explored

the coach-athlete relationship through this framework, leading to the development of instruments and scales focused on how coaches and athletes navigate their connection (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Poczwardowski et al., 2006; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). For example, Feltz et al. (2013) explored how the coach-athlete relationship left student-athletes susceptible to stereotype threat. Kassing and Anderson (2014) utilized the 3C model to explore how student-athletes express dissent, leading to fractures in connection and co-orientation. Finally, Davis et al. (2019) discussed how effective conflict management can motivate and even improve the coach-athlete relationship if both parties are willing to better understand each other's perspectives.

Both the Astin (1991) I-E-O model and the 3C model developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) have been vetted and critiqued in the literature (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Jowett et al., 2017; Rhind & Jowett, 2012; Wachsmuth et al., 2018). Duran et al. (2020) used the Astin model in their study of race-based experiences and sense of belonging but noted the model did not account for the racialized experiences of those from marginalized backgrounds. Additionally, York et al. (2015) explored the Astin model to understand college student academic success, noting that despite the model's strengths, it did not specifically detail how student academic success can be impacted by the various experiences students face before coming to college. Comeaux and Harrison (2011) provided feedback on the Astin model, citing it did not specifically account for the experiences and environmental challenges student-athletes will face in college differ from their non-athlete peers. When exploring challenges with the 3C framework, Rhind and Jowett (2012) developed an additional scale to highlight the lack of detail on how coach-athlete relationships are maintained overtime. Jowett et al. (2017) noted the original 3C model lacked an awareness of athletes' multicultural perspectives, and thus sought to understand the coach-athlete relationship from different cultural lenses. Finally, Wachsmuth et

al. (2018) noted the original 3C model did not have an appropriate space to dive deeper into coach-athlete conflict, thus detailing how the model could be further developed.

Despite these shortcomings, as foundational tools, both the Astin I-E-O model and the 3C framework provide a strong basis for exploring the coach-athlete relationship. For this particular study, this combined conceptual approach (Figure 1) best positions this model within the literature. Utilizing the outline provided by the I-E-O model to situate this study in a college setting with the 3C framework to provide a space to explore the coach-athlete relationship, this conceptual framework will provide a lens to explore how Black student-athletes' pre-college experiences and the subsequent college environment impacts the coach-athlete relationship.

Figure 1

Combined Conceptual Approach Based on Astin I-E-O and 3C Model Frameworks
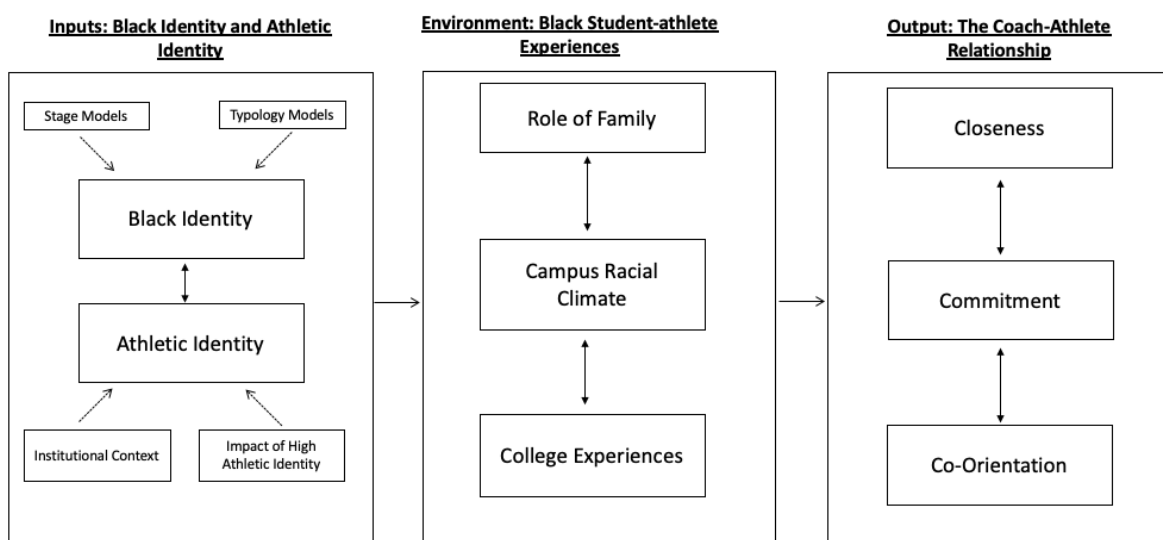
Background to the Problem

Black male student-athletes graduate college at a lower rate than their peers (Harper & Simmons, 2019). According to Allen (1992), this gap in academic success is not due to a lack of will, but due to the historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological patterns that

create an environment of anti-Blackness and restrict Black student achievement. Boyd and Mitchell (2018) found Black men face hostile environments that stifle their achievement, and they often face challenges related to self-esteem, sense of belonging, co-curricular involvement, faculty-staff relationships, and persistence. Harper (2015), while describing the experiences of high-achieving Black men, also noted the racial hostility they encounter on campus. This hostility often means Black men have a lower quality college experience as they manage race-based stereotypes, navigate the "prove-them-wrong-syndrome" in every encounter with a non-Black peer, and suffer from a sense of isolation on most campuses (Harper, 2015).

The history of systemic oppression in the United State has long-term impacts on Black male college students, including lack of persistence through graduation. Nationally, only 34% of Black men graduate from college in a six-year period, which is much lower than any other racial or gender group pursuing higher education (Brooms & Davis, 2017; Harper & Simmons, 2019, Hawkins, 2010). Naylor (2015) found despite that the percentage of Black men earning degrees is steadily increasing, it still lags behind non-Black peers. Even with increased resources dedicated to supporting Black male academic achievement, Black people earn only 10% of college degrees, 12% of master's degrees, and 7% of doctoral degrees (Naylor, 2015). Furthermore, despite being more than 10% of the population in the United States, Black men account for only 5% of higher education students (Johnson et al., 2019). Black men lag behind in nearly all degree-granting categories including baccalaureate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees (Naylor, 2015). Additionally, Black students are 14.8% of the population ages 18-24, but only 9.8% of college undergraduates (Harper & Simmons, 2019).

These racialized experiences, low graduation rates, and significant differences in degree attainment are further complicated when exploring the experiences of Black male student-

athletes. Black men are overrepresented in revenue generating sports teams, making up 3.9% of the college population but 55% of revenue generating sports teams (Harper, 2012). Additionally, 96.1% of campuses graduated Black male student-athletes lower than student-athletes overall and 97.4% of campuses graduate Black male student-athletes lower than students overall (Harper et al., 2013). These lower graduation rates and over-representation lead to Black male student-athletes having to combat the idea they are only in college to compete in athletics and face the same racialized environment as their non-athlete peers, with the added expectation of athletic success.

This need for success is further exacerbated at Power 5 institutions, where Black males' athletic performance is the backbone of a multi-billion-dollar industry (Harper et al., 2019). With so much at stake, the focus of the college experience for Black male student-athletes often focuses on their athletic success, not their academic experience (Cooper et al., 2017). For this reason, Black men participating in DI varsity sports have the lowest graduation rate of any peer group in college, five percentage points behind other Black men, 14 percentage points behind all other student-athletes and 21 percentage points behind all other undergraduate students (Harper et al., 2019).

This graduation gap continues to exist despite research, resources, and responsibility being given to institutions to improve Black male student-athlete academic success (Harper et al., 2013; Harper & Simmons, 2019). Despite additional academic advising, a reduction in hours institutions can dedicate to sports related activities, and a growing emphasis on success outside of athletics, research and statistics highlight that many Black male college student-athletes are not graduating college (Cooper et al., 2017; Rubin, 2016). This lack of degree attainment impacts our greater society, as individuals with baccalaureate degrees earn twice as much as those with

high school diplomas (Naylor, 2015). Harper and Simmons (2019) noted earning a college degree is a public good and increases innovation; in fact, those with degrees have lower unemployment, rely less on government assistance, and are not in as many low-wage jobs. Thus, finding ways to ensure this group of students persist and earn college degrees further helps the long-term economic impact of Black men, Black families, and thus the greater society.

Problem Statement

The role of the athletic-coach in the college experiences and identity development of Black male student-athletes will be the focus of this narrative research study. While in college, student-athletes must manage multiple identities as they navigate rigorous schedule demands, personal development, and expectations from coaches, players, alumni, friends, and families (Gayles & Hu, 2009). Research has focused on the athletic, academic, and social identities of student-athletes, each of which are developed during college (Cooper et al., 2017). The challenge many athletes face is the all-consuming nature of their athletic identity, which engulfs their academic and social identities (Rubin, 2016). Role engulfment has been linked to an increased focus on students' athletic experiences at the expense of other critical academic and social experiences that matter to persisting and thriving in college (Adler & Adler, 1985; Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010). In some cases, student-athletes focus solely on their athletic selves and ignore the academic or social aspects of their identity (Fuller et al., 2016). Furthermore, pressure from the fear of being stereotyped creates an environment of anti-Blackness and can lead some student-athletes to overemphasize aspects of their 'jock' personality, reducing interest in other pursuits (Feltz et al., 2013; Fuller, 2017; Mustaffa, 2017).

The lack of focus on academic identity development is particularly problematic for Black male student-athletes. Across all institutional types, but especially in Division I settings, research

indicates that Black male student-athletes have lower GPAs and six-year graduation rates than their peers (Harper, 2016; Lapchick, 2020). Despite efforts in the past few decades to improve the graduation rates of student-athletes, they still lag behind all other groups including Black women, other student-athletes, and the general student population, in some cases by as much as 40 percentage points (Comeaux, 2015). Even with current efforts focused on the academic success of Black males, the lack of persistence to graduation indicates current academic support programs are not adequately closing this achievement gap.

An athletic coach is an individual who plays an important role in shaping the personal and professional development of student-athletes. Student-athletes spend the majority of their time with coaches for their particular sports; thus, coaches play a critical role in student-athlete identity development (Hicks et al., 2016). Scholarly research includes instances where coaches have helped in student-athlete academic achievement, but often in K-12 settings (Hicks et al., 2016; Hodge, 2015). Within the literature, there are also examples of others on campus (e.g., faculty, academic advisors, peers, etc.) who assist in student-athlete academic achievement (Case et al., 2017; Comeaux, 2008; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Retting & Hu, 2016). However, because student-athletes, particularly Black male student-athletes who participate in varsity sports, spend the majority of their time with their coaches, a better understanding of the critical role athletic coaches play in students' experiences is needed. This is especially true relative to how coaches shape student-athletes' identity development.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to explore the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who play a Division I varsity sport to learn about coach-athlete relationships,

students' identities, and how students' identities are shifted and changed. In order to explore the narrative of Black male student-athletes, the following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who play a Division I varsity sport?

2. How do race and gender intersect and shape athletic, social, and academic identity formation for Black male student-athletes in Division I varsity sports?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between Black male athletes and their coach, particularly in navigating academic, social, and athletic identities and domains in Division I varsity sports?

Significance of the Problem

This topic is significant since Black male student-athletes graduate at lower rates than their peers, despite receiving significant university support (Harper & Simmons, 2019). The literature on student-athletes' college experiences focuses on their experiences as athletes but rarely addresses the intersection of these stories, the relationship with their coaches and the role coaches play in shaping student-athletes experiences and identity development. Sharp and Sheilley (2008) described the influence coaches have on student-athlete academic experiences through studying how coaches decide how student-athletes spend their time. As the authors stated in their recommendations,

> The influence of coaches on their student-athletes is critical. It is very important that the culture of the athletic department stress the role that coaches can and should play in encouraging academic excellence by their student-athletes. This must be more than lip service, coaches often perceive (and realistically so) that their livelihood depends on their

won-lost record, and it not related in any meaningful way to the academic achievement of the student-athletes. (p. 108)

As the quote states, the influence from coaches can focus more on student-athlete academic identity. Coaches must view their role as a developer of student-athletes, not only as athletes, balancing team obligations with personal development (Huml, 2018; Sharp & Sheilley, 2008).

Coach involvement is particularly important due to the trust they have built with student-athletes through the recruiting process. In this particular study, there is no differentiation between the relationship between head coaches and position coaches. The term "coach" refers to the individual described by the participants throughout the study. Within the literature, Kamusoko and Pemberton (2013) found 88% of student-athletes said they had a good relationship with their coach and 90% said coaches have their best judgement for them as a student. These findings suggest if coaches share with student-athletes the importance of being engaged outside of athletics, student-athletes will adhere to this advice (Huntrods et al., 2017). Rankin et al. (2016) also found two statistically significant variables in their study focused on success of student-athletes, one of which was interactions with athletic personnel, specifically athletic coaches. If coaches become more engaged with the experience of Black male student-athletes participating in varsity sports, they increase the potential for these athletes having a more positive college experience, connecting to other individuals at the institutions (including non-athlete peers and university faculty), and higher graduation rates (Menke & Germany, 2019; Sharp & Sheilley, 2008). Black male college athletes are often role models to future generations of athletes, and if younger Black men see their role models achieving both academically and athletically, the potential to reduce an increased athletic identity and develop holistic citizens will lead to a better experience for both those on and off a college campus.

Implications from the potential results of this study include athletic coaches of Division I Power 5 varsity teams understanding the role they have in preparing Black male student-athletes for success. A better understanding of athletic coaches' role in Black male student-athletes' identity and the long-term gains from their involvement may lead to increased graduation rates and further the public good Black male student-athletes have on our greater society. Further implications could include athletic coaches hearing the negative impact focusing solely on athletics has on Black male college student-athletes having a positive college experience, and thus being disengaged from society due to focusing on their athletic success. This is particularly important considering less than two percent of the 20,561 draft-eligible student-athletes in 2020 were selected to the NFL or NBA (NCAA website, 2021).

Failing to address the problem of Black male student-athlete success will lead to continued low graduation rates, intense scrutiny from academic counterparts, and reductions in athletic resources. Additionally, as the United States continues to explore its racially charged history, more Black student-athletes are considering various institution types (particularly HBCUs) to achieve their athletic and academic dreams. The potential to compete in a highly skilled athletic environment while being supported culturally and socially outside of athletic spaces is becoming more prevalent. Furthermore, not addressing this topic continues to perpetuate systems of oppression that further take advantage of the athletic talent Black men bring to college campuses without giving them what they were promised in return: a college education.

Definitions of Key Terms

Several key terms will be used throughout this study, and they are defined here.

Academic experiences: This term is used to understand the learning experiences of students in both formal and informal K-12/higher education settings (Rubin, 2016).

Academic identity: The ways in which you think about, develop, and engage with your academic self (Rubin, 2016).

Anti-Blackness: A tool and driving strategy in the racial legacy of the colonial political state to create an environment centered on the defamation and detachment of black people and black history as an essential postcolonial legacy (Dancy, II, et al., 2018)

Athletic experiences: These experiences in this study refer to the involvement in collegiate sports by student-athletes and the outcomes from those involvements (Watts & Moore, 2001).

Athletic identity: The development of traits and self-concept that is centered on involvement in and dictated by participating in college sports. Brewer (1993) saw athletic identity as the "commitment to the athletic role" (p. 387).

Black and African American: This term is used to refer to the people from the African diaspora (Cross, 1978). These two terms will be used interchangeably during the study, though primarily the term Black will be used.

Black identity: The conceptualization of blackness and how this is presented to broader society (Cross, 1991).

Coach: An individual who provides support to assist another individual achieve their goals through emotional, physical, and social support (Davis et al., 2019)

Coach-athlete relationship: This term will be used to refer to the dyad or group connection between a coach and one or several student-athletes (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004).

Closeness: The interconnection between athletes and coaches (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004)

Co-Orientation: The values shared by both coaches and athletes as they navigate their relationship (Jowett, 2007).

Commitment: The level of dedication between coaches and athletes to their athletic responsibilities (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004).

Division 1 (DI): The highest level of NCAA athletics, often with institutions with larger budgets, a larger number of scholarships, and often have larger student bodies (NCAA Website, 2021).

Identity Foreclosure: The idea that student-athletes will shut off other aspects of their identity and focus on one aspect of themselves, generally their athletic identity (Adler & Adler, 1992).

Revenue generating sports: Generally, in Division I athletics, these are the sports that generate revenue for athletic programs. Often, these sports are men's basketball and football (NCAA Website, 2021).

Stereotype Threat: The feeling you have when you feel your actions will confirm negative stereotypes about your social group (Steele, 1997).

Student-athlete: Postsecondary education students who are engaged in both varsity athletics and academic coursework, thus committing to both an academic and athletic role (Watts & Moore, 2001).

Chapter Summary

This chapter contains an introduction to the role of the athletic coach in the Black student-athletes' college experiences and identities. The chapter began with the conceptual framework of the study, which combines Astin's (1991) I-E-O model and the Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) 3C model to situate the experience of Black male college student-athletes. Next, a detailed background of the problem, centered on the racial experiences of Black men in

higher education was introduced. The introduction continued with the problem statement, which details the lack of support in Black college males' experiences. Thus, the role of coaches who oversee of DI Power 5 varsity teams can play an important (and currently underutilized) role in the experiences of Black male college student-athletes. The purpose statement and research questions follow, providing the specific narrative framework that will be utilized to understand and share the stories of Black male college student-athletes and how the relationship with their coaches impacts their identity development. The significance of the problem is discussed in the continued graduation gaps, racialized college experiences, and lack of social connections for Black men, but particularly Black male student-athletes in varsity sports, concluding with key terms that will be used throughout the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter describes and analyzes previous literature relevant to the role of the athletic coach in the experiences of Black male student-athletes. This literature review is organized into four major themes: Black identity development, athletic identity development, the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes, and the coach-athlete relationship. The chapter begins with an overview of Black identity development by highlighting early models and theoretical foundations of studying Black identity in the United States. This information provides a lens to further understand how Black people, particularly Black men, must survive in a culture of anti-Blackness, succumb to harmful stereotypes and how these stereotypes influence their identity development. Next, the study examines athletic identity development to provide an understanding of how student-athletes conceptualize their identity due to their distinct college experience. Subsequently, the study will review the academic experiences of student-athletes, including an overview of the academic challenges faced by many student-athletes. Next, the review provides an overview of the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes, which includes an in-depth analysis of how the role of the coach can impact Black male student-athletes. Finally, the coach-athlete relationship, as defined in the 3C model (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), will be reviewed and explored, highlighting how the coach can play a role in Black male student-athlete identity development.

Foundations in Black Identity

Understanding the Black male student-athlete experience requires a foundational knowledge of Black identity development. Research on how Black people came to understand who they are, what they value, and the way they are valued is at the core of understanding Black identity. For the specific purposes of this study, with its focus on the experience of the Black

male college student-athlete, an understanding of the identity development of Black college students is warranted.

Black identity development often begins with a review of how Black people in the United States view their history. Beginning with slavery, early studies on the conceptualization of Black identity evolved into two approaches: mainstream research, concepts of studying Black identity within the majority culture; and underground research, a space where Black culture is viewed as a sense of strength (Sellers et al., 1998). Within each frame, two types of models emerged as social scientists sought to better understand the experience of Black people within a Euro-Centric context: stage models and typology frameworks. This research laid the foundation for a more critical understanding of the Black experience (Cross, 1978; Sellers et al., 1998). These ideas are explored in the subsequent paragraphs.

Stage and Typology Models

Stage models outline specific phases individuals navigate to better understand their own identity (Cross, 1978; Neville & Cross, 2017; Sellers et al., 1998). In these stages, there is generally an initial realization of racial identity, managing the internal challenges and triumphs that come with realizing your racial identity, and then emerging with an understanding and confidence about your realized racial perspective. At the conclusion of these stages, the individual living through the experience has the agency to decide to remain immersed in Black culture or find ways to connect with aspects of the dominant culture while maintaining their Black identity.

While William Cross and Charles Thomas are often referenced when understanding Black identity development, their stage models often center on self-hatred as a cornerstone for exploring Black identity development. Sellers et al. (1998) provided the Multi-dimensional

Model for Racial Identity (MMRI) for exploring racial identity, which centers the experience of the individual as the cornerstone of understanding their racial identity. The MMRI does centers on four key tenants: 1) MMRI assumes racial identities are situationally influenced and stable properties of the individual; 2) individuals have a number of different identities and these identities are hierarchical; 3) an individual's racial identity is most salient of their identities; and 4) the model is concerned with the status of racial identity at a given point in time, not the development of racial identity over time. As a typology model, this foundational approach for studying racial identity is an important component to understanding previous and future models of racial identity.

Typology models differ from stage models by focusing on a holistic cultural understanding and fluidity rather than a linear process (Helms, 1990). These types or phases are often centered in understanding Black identity, rejecting white identity, and eventual assimilation into a new cultural understanding focusing on surviving at all costs (Helms, 1990). Each typology represents the space an individual returned to as they continued to learn about their own identity. For Black college students, learning about their own identity is complex, influenced by challenging racial environments, and filled with success despite difficulty. These ideas are explored in the subsequent paragraphs.

Outcomes From Studying Black Identity

Black identity is complex, emerging, and ever-present (White, 1998). For Black students, managing this complexity takes place as an ongoing journey during a time of great personal transformation (Harper, 2015; White, 1998). As Black people encounter various environments, they learn the need to present different aspects of their identity in specific settings (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). The need to code-switch or move through different phases of their identity

process in order to be perceived as being a valued member of the majority further adds to the complications of being a Black person occupying non-Black spaces (Neville & Cross, 2017). This occupation of non-Black space is further complicated by the limited connection to Black stories not being told in political, social, economic, or educational settings (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Black people learn that their history is secondary to a majority perspective, and research highlights how this impacts the way Black students conceptualize their personal identity (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Black students often note taking classes related to Black history, African American studies, or race theory and emerge learning there is no one way to be Black (Neville & Cross, 2017). This racial awakening is noted in both the stage and typology models developed by Cross and Helms and provides further evidence of the complexity of the Black experience at its foundation (Cross, 1978; Helms, 1990; Neville & Cross, 2017).

Additional perspectives from research notes this conceptualization of Black identity is even more complicated for college students (Hatcher et al., 2015; Neville & Cross, 2017; Pope, 1998). Pope (1998) highlighted this point through studying the racial identity awareness and psychological development of Black college students. The author found a link between internalization status (how you conceptualize your racial identity) and establishing clarifying purposes (defining who you are). Meaning, Black students psychologically internalized the racism they faced, but understanding their racialized environments, in some cases, also helped them identify and clarify their purpose (Pope, 1998). The author concluded it was important to understand your racial identity, because it correlated with impacting your psychological well-being (Pope, 1998). Hatcher et al. (2015) used mixed-methods rooted in Phinney's stage model for ethnic identity development to examine the experience of 127 Black men in college with 12 follow-up interviews. The authors discovered there was a statistically significant correlation

between ethnic identity development and high school GPA. This was also important because the more students believed in their ethnic identity, the higher their grades (Hatcher et al., 2015). Furthermore, perceptions of ethnic identity development and school conditions impacted academic achievement (Hatcher et al., 2015). In fact, this article noted motivation, GPA, and other items that translated into doing well post-high school graduation were influenced by the ways students conceptualized their ethnic identity (Hatcher et al., 2015). This connection between having an understanding of your ethnic identity, positive self-concept, and high school GPA is important, particularly because high school GPA is often a predictor to academic success in college (Allen, 1992; Cokley, 2003; Comeaux, 2008). Neville and Cross (2017) used narrative techniques to explore how 64 college students in different countries had epiphanies about their racial identities. Outcomes from these students' racial epiphanies included increased activism, the importance of formal education to dismantling racism and, for some, disappointment from realizing racism exists (Neville & Cross, 2017). This complexity for Black college students captures what they must navigate internally while in college, which is further complicated by the external racially hostile environment they encounter daily (Harper, 2015; Haywood & Brown, 2017).

Critical Race Theory and the Black College Student Experience

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the late 1970's out of a legal movement as an outcome from the quest for civil rights in the 1960's and the belief that the quest for these rights had become stagnant (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). CRT is centered in the need to find justice in social, economic, political spaces focusing specifically on the role of race, racism, and power (Landson-Billings, 1998). CRT centers on five tenants: 1) racism is a normal part of our daily experience; 2) interest convergence is a motivational factor in those in positions of power to

advocate for marginalized groups; 3) counter story-telling is needed to help reshape the prevalent perceptions of an oppressed group; 4) the coupling of intersectionality and anti-essentialism is needed to further explore within group difference; and 5) whiteness is viewed as property is a centerpiece for power (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018; Landson-Billings, 1998; Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These tenants have informed future research and the exploration of how CRT impacts the daily experiences of all people, particularly Black people.

For Black college students, CRT emerges in the literature when exploring their experiences on college campuses. Boyd and Mitchell (2018) utilized a CRT framework to explore the experiences of Black men in college, highlighting these students faced hostile environments and daily frustrations in their pursuit of academic achievement. Naylor (2015) also explored the experiences of Black men in college through a CRT framework noting Black students attain degrees at a lower rate than their White peers leading to lower lifetime wages and increased lifetime poverty. Haywood and Brown (2017) also utilized CRT to explore the experience of Black students on campus, noting their daily interactions are centered in micro-aggressions and a need to survive campus at all costs. This need for survival was further supported by Clark et al. (2015) who used a CRT framework to share how faculty can at times be surprised by the academic achievement of Black students, but particularly Black men.

For Black male student-athletes, ideas of CRT are beginning to emerge in the literature. Rubin (2016) utilized a CRT framework to highlight the detrimental effects of athletics on Black male student-athlete academic achievement. This detrimental effect is particularly telling due to the lack of role models in athletic leadership for Black male student-athletes and the number of additional opportunities they witness their white peers receive while in college (Singer, 2005). Njororai (2012) provided an extensive review of the Black male college student-athlete

experience using both CRT and student-involvement theory. The author highlighted the time demands, pressure, and lack of support Black male student-athletes must navigate while managing high expectations from their peers, faculty, family and coaches. Singer (2016) utilized narrative techniques and a CRT framework to detail the stories of Black male college student-athletes, finding educators and peers unfairly label these athletes which is something the athletes notice.

Surviving Racially Hostile Environments

Even as Black students have specific positive outcomes from understanding their identity, they must continue to navigate racially hostile environments often centered in anti-Blackness (Brooks & Martin, 2022; Harper, 2015; Hodges, 2015; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). White (1998) noted that Black students have a dual relationship with campus: that as a student and that as a Black student. Flowers (2004) described the importance of Black students being involved on campus to help build a community in a racially hostile environment. The author noted connections to Black student organizations, residential communities, and even the local community provide outlets from the racial tension and consistent microaggressions that may exist on a predominately white Institution (PWI) campus (Flowers, 2004). Liversage et al. (2018) examined the experience of first-generation Black students in college and found as students navigated a new environment, they must navigate the emotional journey of leaving home, face challenges of networking on campus, experience feelings of being alone and overwhelmed by campus, and learn how to deal with diversity on a racially hostile campus. While navigating this new space with racial microaggressions and consistent reminders of being different, the participants shared that failure was not an option and they had to learn how to navigate campus to survive it (Liversage et al., 2018). Sullivan and Platenburg (2017) analyzed how the media and

information sources impact the ways in which Black people conceptualize their identity. The authors noted that often Black students (and Black student-athletes in particular) struggle with Black identity development due to the media linking certain sports to blackness. Thus, when Black students see themselves represented in the media, they see some positive, but generally more negative media coverage, which can negatively impact Black identity development (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). The understanding of Black identity development models, how these models provide a framework for the lived experiences of Black people, the complexity added by being a Black student in college, and how these Black college students must survive hostile environments highlights the complex lived experiences Black students navigate daily. This lived experience is further complicated for Black college students who participate in varsity athletics. As this study explores the coach-athlete relationship of Black-student-athletes, an understanding of athletic identity development is worth exploring.

Athletic Identity

Since this study is seeking to understand the Black male student-athlete experience with their coaches, an understanding of athletic identity development is warranted. Broadly, Murphy et al. (1996) defined identity development as "an active exploration of possible roles and behaviors, followed by a commitment to the occupational and ideological options that are most consistent with an individual's values, needs, interests, and skills" (p. 239). This concept of behaviors being connected to values, interests, and skills describes athletic identity. According to Bimber (2014), "Athletic identity is characterized as the extent to which one identifies with fulfilling the social role of an athlete" (p. 796). Generally, for the purposes of this literature review, athletic identity and student-athlete identity will be used interchangeably and are broadly defined as commitment to the athletic role (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003). This commitment to

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the athletic role can be influenced by several factors: sport type and gender identity. Since the

focus of this study is on Black men who participate in revenue-generating sports on DI

campuses, these factors are further explored.

Sport Type

One of the major challenges impacting student-athletes is the sport type (Griffith &

Johnson, 2002). Often, these particular sports are affiliated with Division I institutions (NCAA

Website, 2021). Within the literature, there is consensus that campus type shapes the strength to

which a student-athletes identifies with the athletic role (Cooper et al., 2017; Rankin et al.,

2016). For the purpose of this study, a focus on the experience of DI athletes is warranted, since

these student-athletes will be the focus of the study. Rankin et al. (2016) explored the

experiences of 8,481 student-athletes from all three NCAA divisions and over 23 sports to

understand how campus climate impacted academic success, athletic success, and athletic

identity. The authors found generally DII and DIII student-athletes have more frequent and

positive interactions with faculty than their DI peers (Rankin et al., 2016). Cooper et al. (2017)

used the NCAA GOALS survey to explore the varied racial experiences of student-athletes and

found DI student-athletes had higher athletic identities than their DII and DIII peers (Cooper et

al., 2017). This limited faculty connection combined with a heightened athletic identity can make

it difficult for DI student-athletes to develop a more complete academic identity (Cooper et al.,

2017).

In addition to the campus being a DI campus, participating in a revenue generating sport

(generally football and men's basketball) also creates a unique experience for student-athletes

(Retting & Hu, 2016; Watts & Moore, 2001). Gayles and Hu (2009) found student-athletes that

participate in high profile sports had lower cultural attitudes when interacting with students other

than their teammates and fewer interactions with other students than their low-profile student-athlete peers. Further research found student-athletes who participate in revenue generating sports have increased identity foreclosure, higher athletic identity, and lower career maturity (Murphy et al., 1996; Rankin et al., 2016). One reason for this increased athletic identity is the time spent in practice, film study, workouts, and other team activities (Despres et al., 2008). Navarro (2015) notes how these differences in sport type can impact career decision making. In a qualitative study that included 29 participants utilizing Career Construction Theory, the author found the majority of the participants who noted a misalignment between major and career interests were in revenue generating sports (Navarro, 2015). This is particularly compelling since the research tells us the majority of the participants in revenue generating sports are Black males.

Gender

Gender differences also emerged in the literature when reviewing the student-athlete experience. Kamusoko and Pemberton (2013) took quantitative findings from a mixed-methods study to explore student-athlete well-being. The authors found there were significant differences based on gender in terms of seeking mental health support and graduation rates, with female athletes scoring higher in both areas (Kamusoko & Pemberton, 2013). Chen et al. (2010) found that academically, female athletes generally outperformed their male peers in terms of test scores and GPA, despite spending just as much time participating in their sport. The authors further explored this point, noting male student-athletes reported higher scores on perceived athletic benefits and athletic identity (Chen et al., 2010). When exploring their college experience, Rankin et al. (2016) found female student-athletes had lower athletic identity, higher perceptions of the campus climate, higher perceptions of respect, and more personal comfort with team diversity (Rankin et al., 2016). Finally, Lally and Kerr (2013) explored differences in career

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maturity and identity with student-athletes via qualitative interviews with four male and four female Canadian student-athletes. The authors found a focus on athletic identity leads to challenges with their post-athletic careers, with female athletes having higher scores in both career maturity and career development. The noted differences for male student-athletes and their long-term outcomes further highlights how understanding this particular portion of the population will assist in improving their college experience.

The literature on sport type and gender difference notes that DI, revenue-generating, and male student-athletes have a different college experience. Often, these student-athletes face varied structural challenges and must meet expectations from coaches, teammates, fans, boosters, and athletic departments (Graham et al., 2015). These pressure points often lead these athletes to have a greater focus on athletics than their peers. This intense focus on athletics leads to a heightened athletic identity. This heightened athletic identity can have negative lasting impacts, particularly for Black male student-athletes. These impacts are further discussed below.

Outcomes of Strong Athletic Identity

Often, participating in Division I sports can lead to a high athletic identity (Gaston-Gayles, 2005; Huml, 2018; Murphy et al., 1996). Murphy et al. (1996) explored the academic identity, athletic identity, and career maturity of college athletes and described a strong athletic identity as when a student-athlete is overly committed to their athletic role and thus does not explore additional aspects of their other identity characteristics (namely, their social and academic identities). Additionally, Gaston-Gayles (2005) provided a framework for understanding student-athletes with high athletic identity through examining student-athlete academic and athletic identity and their motivation. By developing and validating the Student-athletes' Motivation towards Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ), the author noted

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non-White athletes and those athletes participating in revenue-generating sports had the most unbalanced scores when comparing academic and athletic motivation. This hyper focus on career athletic success and focus on athletics in college is another indicator of a strong athletic identity (Gaston-Gayles, 2005).

Due to the time demands of participating in college athletics, and expectations from family, coaches, peers, and society, student-athletes are immersed in environments that over-emphasize their athletic selves (Menke & Germany, 2019; Watts & Moore, 2001). This can lead to a myriad of unwanted outcomes including stereotype threat and identity foreclosure, violence outside of competition, eating disorders, poor academic performance, substance abuse, depression, and poor social life (Chen et al., 2010; Feltz et al., 2013). Notably, a strong athletic identity impacts academic achievement, leads to high levels of identity foreclosure, low career maturity, and difficulty transitioning out of sport after college, particularly for athletes in varsity sports.

Low College GPA and Graduation Rates

Researchers describe how a strong athletic identity can impact college academic expectations and graduation rates among student-athletes, particularly Black male student-athletes (Bimper, 2014; Harper & Simmons, 2019; Hodge, 2015). Cooper et al. (2017) reported lower GPAs for Black male student-athletes with greater athletic identity. This was further supported by Bimper's (2014) earlier work on the racial and athletic identity of 225 student-athletes utilizing the Athlete Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) and the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS). In conducting his analysis, Bimper (2014) found GPA was negatively associated with athletic identity, meaning the higher your GPA, the lower your athletic identity; and subsequently the stronger your athletic identity, the lower your GPA. Gaston-Gayles (2005)

further highlighted these ideas when examining academic motivation and academic success, finding the higher the academic motivation, the higher the GPA and graduation rates among student-athletes. Despite having high initial academic expectations, Black male student-athletes often have their academic motivation engulfed by their athletic identity, which then negatively impacts their college GPA (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Cooper et al., 2017).

Black male student-athletes are not given the same academic opportunities as their white peers at PWIs (Njororai, 2012; Southall et al.; 2015). The combination of lower GPA and graduation rates further adds to the disparities for Black male student-athletes, impacting their post-college plans and leading to high identity foreclosure and decreased career maturity. The graduation rates of Black male student-athletes are often lower than their athletic peers (Harper et al., 2013; Harper & Simmons, 2019; Hodge, 2015), particularly in varsity sports (Rubin, 2016). Harper and Simmons (2019) examined the graduation rates of Black males at 65 Power 5 institutions and noted Black male graduation rates were often behind those of their peers. This was particularly true for Black male student-athletes, who had lower graduation rates than their white peers at every institution and lower rates than Black men at over 80% of public higher education institutions (Harper et al., 2018). Hodge et al. (2008) also noted these differences, finding that Black male student-athletes graduated at much lower rates than their peers. According to Hodge et al. (2008), this gap has created an "educational debt" (rather than an achievement gap) that is owed to Black male student-athletes.

This gap in graduation rates is consistent across NCAA Divisions. Johnson (2016) utilized a bracketed case study framework to study the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes at DIII Rowan University. The author found that, when focusing on special admits for student-athletes, 36% of those admitted did not graduate (Johnson, 2016). Southall et

al. (2015) explored the graduation gaps for Black male athletes participating in revenue-generating sports by examining their experiences at PWIs. The authors, who labeled the student-athletes as "profit-athletes," found graduation rates at HBCUs were higher than at PWIs with adjusted graduation gap rates for Black male student-athletes.

Identity Foreclosure and Career Maturity

Identity foreclosure is "a commitment to an occupation in the absence of engaging in exploratory behaviors" (Brown et al., 2000, p. 54). Generally, identity foreclosure develops when the athletic role overshadows the student role (Navarro & Malvaso, 2015). This role-engulfment can negatively impact many aspects of student-athlete identity including career decision making, academic achievement, academic commitment, and social opportunities (Lally & Kerr, 2013; Miller & Buttell, 2018). Brewer and Petitpas (2017) provided an overview of identity foreclosure and found for student-athletes a high identity foreclosure meant academic identity was reduced to very low levels, negatively impacting the academic experience. When student-athletes have high identity foreclosure, they are also known to have low career maturity. This impact of high identity foreclosure, lower career maturity, is often seen in student-athletes who participate in varsity sports, which tend to be over-represented by Black men (Graham et al., 2015; Harper, 2015; Lally & Kerr, 2013). As such, understanding previous studies in this area is critical to exploring the experiences of Black male student-athletes.

Researchers have noted how athletic identity influences career maturity in student-athletes, ultimately leaving a long-term impact on their careers outside of sports (Brown et al., 2000; Lally & Kerr, 2013; Navarro, 2015). Career maturity is "the formation of mature, realistic career plans grounded in assessing one's career goals, interests, and abilities and awareness of vocational opportunities and requirements" (Lally & Kerr, 2013, p. 275). Generally, the literature

indicates a strong athletic identity is correlated to low career maturity (Lally & Kerr, 2013; Menke & Germany, 2019; Navarro, 2015; Navarro & McCorkick, 2017); however, Brown et al. (2000) found there was no statistically significant relationship between student-athlete identity and career decision making. Despite these conflicting findings, researchers have noted that that when student-athletes have interests outside of sports they are more likely to successfully transition to a career after college. This was noted in Menke and Germany's (2019) study of student-athletes who participated in DI varsity sports. In their study, Menke and Germany (2019) conducted interviews with 14 student-athletes who participated in DI varsity sports and found student-athletes having a focus in other areas (i.e., career goals) can help in decreased athletic identity and help with career transitions. Due to coaches spending so much time with student-athletes, they have the potential to support a broader life-after-sport career process and assist in varsity sport student-athletes' career transitions.

Studies on the career experiences of student-athletes found strong athletic-identity can lead to decreased career maturity, delayed career development, and negatively impact student-athlete career choices (Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010; Murphy et al., 1996). Lally and Kerr (2013) found college student-athletes were poor at developing career maturity and career planning. Navarro and McCormick (2017) provided more recent evidence of this idea to support previous findings. These authors utilized mixed-methods approaches to follow the career of 125 student-athletes after they completed college. The follow-up included in-depth interviews with 12 of the participants three to seven years after they retired from athletics. The majority of the participants felt colleges needed to provide a career development program since more than two-thirds of the retired student-athletes did not research career options before graduation (Navarro & McCormick, 2017). To try and prevent this type of outcome, some student-athletes did note the

importance of connecting with university career services offices (Navarro & McCormick, 2017). Furthermore, some student-athletes noted their career identities changed over time, with the student-athletes becoming more focused on life after sports later in their athletic careers (Kamusoko & Pemberton, 2013; Lally & Kerr, 2013). Coaches, who spend a significant amount of time with student-athletes, can notice these transitional phases and ensure institutions have programs and partnerships focused on assisting student-athletes as they retire from collegiate athletics.

Researchers have also demonstrated that Black male student-athletes often have lower career maturity compared to their peers (Brewer & Petipas, 2017; Graham et al., 2015). Navarro (2015) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to explore the major career choices of 16 male and 13 female African American student-athletes. The author found that, despite having a better understand of academic interests and their career choices, African American male student-athletes tended to have lower career maturity compared to their peers. Brewer and Petipas (2017) continued to explore the topic of career transitions for student-athletes, particularly African American males. The authors described how athletic identity leads to low levels of career maturity. The decrease in career maturity as athletic identity increases is further described by Graham et al. (2015), who noted that for Black male student-athletes the amount of time spent participating in sports-related activities increased their athletic identity and thus decreased their career maturity and academic identity. Due to the research providing examples of how athletic identity negatively impacts career maturity and coaches have a role in impacting athletic identity, coaches could be a critical component in reducing athletic identity in student-athletes which would positively impact career maturity and allow for student-athletes to not be engulfed by their athletic identity.

Life After Sports

The difficulties in student-athlete transition to retirement, or life after sport, is highlighted in the research (Menke & Germany, 2019; Miller & Buttell, 2018). Major themes as student-athletes transition out of sports include coping with transition, gains/strengths from effective transition, and a loss of athletic identity (Menke & Germany, 2019). Miller and Buttell (2018) conducted a Client Oriented Practical Evidence Search (COPES) of peer reviewed articles that focused on student-athlete retirement and revealed student-athletes are not ready to transition and more support is needed to successfully transition from a life in sports. While in college, only 10-15% of student-athletes seek the support of a counselor, which is much lower than their non-athlete peers (Kaier et al., 2015). This lack of seeking support can further impact the difficulty of transitioning out of sports, often leading to depression, decreased physical health, increased isolation, and even thoughts of self-harm or suicide (Griffith & Johnson, 2002; Menke & Germany, 2019; Miller & Buttell, 2018). Student-athletes who are forced to retire often note that drastic injury, lack of professional opportunities, and the looming retirement from sports can lead to life-long dreams ending and subsequent feelings of depression and loneliness (Menke & Germany, 2019). This feeling of isolation is coupled with the sentiment that institutions do not support student-athletes after they seek to retire (Miller & Buttell, 2018). Additional support from those who spend a significant time with student-athletes and have developed relationships with them including student-athlete academic counselors, university counseling services, and athletic coaches is needed to support a successful transition process out of sports for college student-athletes (Miller & Buttell, 2018; Navarro & McCormick, 2017).

Academic Experiences of Black Student-Athletes

The athletic role can take precedence over the academic role, particularly in highly competitive environments. However, Black student-athletes must also navigate campus life with a third identity—their Black identity—which presents its own set of challenges. The impact of a high-athletic identity is often connected with a reduced capacity for student-athletes to develop their academic identity (Huml, 2018; Menke & Germany, 2019; Sharp & Shelby, 2008). In order to better understand the role of the coach in Black student-athletes' academic and athletic identity development, an understanding of the academic experiences of Black male college student-athletes is essential (Harper, 2015). This is particularly important due to the literature continually highlighting DI varsity athletics being over-represented with Black men (Harper, 2015).

Rubin (2016) defines academic identity as the ways in which you think about, develop, and engage with your academic self. Within the literature, the academic experiences of Black student-athletes are described in a variety of contexts. In some cases, high-achieving Black males overcome racist campus environments, low expectations, and stereotypes to realize high academic marks (Harper, 2013). In other cases, the challenges faced on-campus impact Black male student-athletes, leading to a negative college experience (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Harper et al., 2018). Generally, discussions of the challenges faced by Black male student-athletes focus on their athletic selves; however, a more concentrated overview of students' academic experiences beyond low graduation rates is critical to understanding this student population.

This section of the literature review will describe and analyze the literature surrounding the myriad of factors that influence the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes. The role of family, the campus racial and academic environment, and students' relationships with

university faculty, administrators, and athletic coaches will be discussed in an attempt to capture the robust academic experiences of this population. Finally, this portion of the review will conclude by highlighting the numerous gaps in the literature, providing a compelling argument to explore the role of the coach in developing Black male student-athlete academic identity.

Role of Family

Within the literature on Black male student-athletes, the impact of family in Black male identity development has been noted by numerous researchers (Beamon, 2010; Beamon & Bell, 2006; Carter-Francique, 2015). Beamon (2010) examined the experiences of 20 Black male former student-athletes, who all shared how family played a key role in their K-12 academic experiences. Carter-Francique et al. (2015) utilized critical race theory to better understand Black male athletes' transition to campus and discovered they felt their families were an important factor for their academic and social campus integration. Singer's (2016) narrative case study of three Black male student-athletes found family members played a positive role in the student-athlete academic experience, particularly from a critical race lens. Singer (2019) continues this work using narrative tools to detail Black male student excellence and resilience, describing how Black male athletes persist despite limited resources and challenging family environments. Furthermore, Clark et al. (2015) used a critical race lens to highlight the experiences of a Black father and his two sons who attended the same institution as student-athletes. The author found the role and experience of the father was impactful on his sons, who followed their father's footsteps, and both graduated with a master's degree and started their doctoral work utilizing the resources provided from their athletic scholarship (Clark et al., 2015).

The role of the family for Black male student-athletes can also have a negative impact on their academic experiences in college. Simiyu (2012) highlights this by discussing how families

do not often focus on Black male student-athletes' academic achievement. The Black family can, at times, over-emphasize athletic success when compared to their non-Black family peer groups. This emphasis on athletic achievement can disproportionately impact Black male student-athletes, who have role models that are often in sports and music; not professors and politicians (Bimber, 2014; Comeaux, 2008).

Role of the Campus Racial Environment

Black male student-athletes have described differences in how they are treated as students compared to their white peers (Melendez, 2010; Singer, 2005; Singer, 2016). Singer (2005) conducted a qualitative study and used critical race theory to understand the experience of Black male student-athletes. The respondents compared their racial experiences to their white teammates, specifically noting within athletics that coaches treat Black male athletes differently, do not feel they can play positions that require more cognitive skills, and are not as concerned with the academic pursuits of Black student-athletes (Singer, 2005). Furthermore, these respondents noted they are treated differently than white teammates including not being given additional chances to make mistakes, peers and faculty having lower academic expectations, and being more encouraged to focus on their athletic abilities (Singer, 2005). When exploring academic coursework, Singer (2016) used a narrative case study framework to explore the experience of three Black male athletes from a critical lens. The author found white student-athletes are learning narratives that emphasize their lived experience when studying a particular topic. This makes a difference in how white student-athletes connect to their coursework, including being more engaged, interested, and validated due to their white identity being represented in their course materials (Singer, 2016). Furthermore, Black male student-athletes experience both microaggressions and stereotype threat at a level that may significantly impact

their academic progress and campus experiences (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007; Feltz et al., 2013; Fuller, 2017).

Microaggressions

Researchers on the campus environment have noted how microaggressions lead to vastly different experiences for Black college students in the United States. For Black men, particularly Black male student-athletes, the stereotypes, limited expectations, and reduced academic opportunities due to microaggressions negatively impact their college experience (Comeaux, 2012; Harper, 2012; Haywood & Brown, 2017). Haywood and Brown (2017) define microaggressions as "a brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory; negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 133). The literature is filled with the experiences faced by Black male student-athletes and the microaggressions they encounter on campus. Sailes (1993) was one of the first researchers to explore these encounters, describing some of the different stereotypes expressed by both white and Black non-student-athlete about Black male student-athletes. Findings include white students felt that Black student-athletes took classes to remain eligible and that white student-athletes were more intellectually capable than their Black student-athlete peers (Sailes, 1993). The author continued by finding white students felt white student-athletes received better grades and white students reported that Black athletes were academically under-prepared (Sailes, 1993). Within this study the data revealed whites and males held stronger negative stereotypes than blacks and females about Black athletes. Generally, white and male participants felt stronger that Black athletes were not academically prepared to be in college, had lower academic achievement when compared to their white athlete peers, and were not as intelligent. (Sailes, 1993).

Research on the Black male student-athlete academic experience in college points specifically to negative racial insults these individuals face on a daily basis (Haywood & Brown, 2017). Bimper (2015) utilized qualitative methods to capture the academic experiences of seven Black male student-athletes. The author found these individuals know the system is racist, but often cannot adequately describe the challenges they face daily, thus enduring language, feelings, and experiences rooted in racial microaggressions (Bimper, 2015). Compounding the inability to articulate the challenges on campus, Navarro and Malvaso (2015) found these racial experiences are one of the top three issues impacting Black male student-athletes and often exacerbated by faculty and other students. Comeaux (2012) also highlights how microaggressions impact the Black male student-athlete experience, but more specifically in their relationships with faculty. The author found professors often felt student-athletes slowed the pace of class discussions and needed additional academic support to be successful. This sentiment from the person who most directly shapes the academic experience of Black male student-athletes can decrease their academic motivation and increase the likelihood the focus of Black student-athletes will be on their athletic pursuits (Comeaux, 2012; Haywood & Brown, 2017)

Stereotype Threat

Previous research also provides numerous examples of how stereotype threat impacts Black male student-athlete academic experiences (Bimper, 2014; Comeaux, 2012; Feltz et al., 2013; Sailes, 1993; Stone et al., 2012). Sailes (1993) used a quantitative 30-question Likert-scale survey administered to faculty and students to be one of the first researchers to explore this topic. The study yielded several significant findings, specifically the stereotypes white faculty and students had about Black male student-athletes. Results indicated 45% of respondents felt Black males were not as academically intelligent, 44% felt these athletes took easier classes, 37%

agreed these athletes were not as academically competitive as their peers. This sentiment was echoed almost 20 years later when Comeaux (2012) explored the experiences of Black male student-athletes' relationships with faculty. By looking through 122 qualitative responses to an online questionnaire, the author explored how Black male student-athletes managed perceptions about their athletic identity. Comeaux's findings mirror those of Sailes, as his analysis discovered students and faculty still stereotype Black male student-athletes and their academic ability and academic motivation and believe they receive preferential treatment. One study participant shared that a faculty member asked the class if any student-athletes were registered for the course. When no one raised their hand up, the faculty member said to their class, "Good, I don't have to slow down then" (Comeaux, 2012, p. 193).

Feltz et al. (2013) examined the impact of stereotype threat 318 student-athletes from 11 different campuses from all three NCAA Divisions experienced. The authors found student-athletes with high stereotype threat often participated in DI varsity athletics, which are over-represented with Black male student-athletes. Furthermore, they noted Black male student-athletes have scored lower when asked about their coach's belief in their academic abilities (Feltz et al., 2013). Stone et al. (2012) explored the differences in stereotype threat for engaged and disengaged student-athletes. In this study, student-athletes were primed with certain aspects of their identity (either as a scholar-athlete, a student, or not primed) and the differences between white and Black student-athletes as well as engaged and disengaged athletes were compared. The authors found student-athletes who were Black and engaged performed poorly on test questions when primed with their scholar-athlete identity. Student-athletes who were disengaged performed better than Black male student-athletes who were engaged in nearly all tests. Furthermore, when not primed with their athletic identity, all athletes performed better on tests,

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particularly Black male student-athletes. When this group was not primed, Black male student-athletes performed close to or better than their white peers. This is significant because, when primed with their athletic identity, engaged Black male student-athletes lived up to their own expectations, further highlighting the impact of stereotype-threat on this specific population.

Fuller (2017) utilized stereotype threat and stereotype management as frameworks to better understand the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes, finding stereotypes negatively impacted the academic performance of Black male student-athletes. This negative impact on academic performance is further complicated by stereotype threat, particularly since student-athletes primarily only engage with other student-athletes. This finding holds true across various institutional types and adds to the potential influence and growth of Black male student-athletes facing stereotype threat (Johnson, 2016).

This impact of stereotype threat can also impact Black male athletes' academic motivation. Simons et al. (1999) explored the academic motivation of 361 student-athletes by exploring both fear of failure and motivation. The authors found if you had a low fear of failure and a low motivation you were a failure acceptor, meaning you were willing to accept your failure in your classroom pursuits. If you had a high fear of failure, but were not motivated you were a failure avoider, meaning you did not want to fail, but you were not motivated to ensure academic success. Both failure acceptors and failure avoiders were overrepresented by Black male student-athletes, meaning not only do these athletes have low academic motivation, this motivation is further impacted by negative academic expectations. One way to combat these challenges it through relationships with those closest to athletes (often coaches).

Role of the Academic Environment

The academic environment for Black male college student-athletes plays an important role in shaping their academic experiences and outcomes (Beamon, 2010; Brewer & Petitpas, 2017). The literature highlights several areas where the academic experiences of Black male college student-athletes is distinct from their peers, and athletes can feel as though the college campus has become a "new plantation" where Black bodies are put through rigorous physical activity at the entertainment and financial benefit of Whites (Adler & Adler, 1987; Cooper & Hall, 2016; Hawkins, 2010; Kamusoko & Pemberton, 2013). Understanding these experiences helps further amplify why the coach-athlete relationship is a potential area for enhancement of the Black male student-athlete academic experience. These areas, explored in further detail throughout this section, include initial academic expectations, academic support services, academic clustering, faculty, university administrators, and athletic coaches.

Initial Academic Expectations

When student-athletes begin college, the literature tells us they have both expectations for academic and athletic success (Adler & Adler, 1987; Kamusoko & Pemberton, 2013). In their groundbreaking study on student-athletes, Adler and Adler (1987) spent over two seasons with a DI Men's basketball program attending team meetings, conducting interviews with players and coaches, and serving as team confidants. The authors noted student-athletes, particularly Black male student- athletes, began their college careers with a focus on both athletics and academics. This idea quickly shifts as student-athletes come to the realization of the time demands, requirements, and singular focus on success in their particular sport requires (Adler & Adler, 1987; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Harper, 2015; Watts & Moore, 2001). Kamusoko and Pemberton (2013) complemented this idea, noting first-year and sophomore athletes were generally satisfied

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with their campus wellbeing, valued academics over athletics, and planned to persist through completion of their undergraduate degrees.

The initial excitement of perceived academic success exists despite varied and often fractured academic backgrounds for DI varsity sport Black male student-athletes (Adler & Adler, 1985; Cooper et al., 2017). Hodge (2015) noted that Black male student-athletes hope to achieve both athletic and academic success while in college. However, from the beginning, Black male student-athletes are steered toward athletic pursuits and not academic opportunities (Hodge, 2015). While studying a college basketball team and being immersed in their culture, the foundational work of Adler and Adler (1985) detailed Black male student-athletes are similar to their peers, noting they are excited about their academic pursuits when they begin college. However, these student-athletes quickly realize between practice, games, workouts and other athletic commitments, little time is left to excel academically. Cooper et al. (2017) supports this idea by highlighting their findings in an analysis of the 2006 NCAA GOALS survey. The authors discovered, across all divisions, Black male student-athletes had positive attitudes about academics, but lower engagement than their athlete and non-athlete peers. Over time, despite having high academic expectations, the reduced focused on academic achievement due to athletic commitments negatively impacts Black male student-athlete academic identity (Beamon & Bell, 2006).

Institutional Academic Support

Institutional academic support staff are an important factor in the academic success of Black male student-athletes. Gayles et al. (2015) focused on DI programs with high graduation rates among Black male student-athletes. In both public and private institutional settings, the authors found that successful academic support programs have specific initiatives focused on

Black male athlete support including tutoring services, adequate computer access, study planning, orientation programs, academic mentorship programs, partnerships with faculty, and programs to celebrate Black male student-athletes' academic achievements. Similarly, Sato et al. (2018) also noted the importance of academic support programs in the Black male student-athlete experience. The authors used qualitative techniques to study the academic support program experiences of six Black male student-athletes attending a PWI. Utilizing both self-determination theory and transformational leadership theory, study participants described the need for academic support services to provide tips for study habits, routines, and resources to adequately support Black male student-athlete academic success (Sato et al., 2018). Bjornsen and Dinkel (2017) also noted the important role academic support staff play in student-athlete academic success. This study, which took feedback from coaches, specifically detailed how academic support staff assist in student-athlete transitions, academic achievement, and academic motivation (Bjornsen & Dinkel, 2017).

Conversely, Black male student-athletes also note a lack of institutional support in their academic experiences while in college (Comeaux, 2008; Cooper et al., 2017). Comeaux (2008) found Black male student-athletes' college experience is impacted by social isolation, discrimination, limited support and lack of integration into the college environment. Cooper et al., (2017) continued this narrative around lack of institutional support by noting Black male student-athletes have a more negative perception of their campus environment and specifically note the lack of support in making campus feel more accessible. This lack of support from campus can prevent Black male student-athletes from maximizing their academic achievement (Cooper et al., 2017). Simiyu (2012) noted Black student-athletes' experiences are impacted by cultural and social isolation with only other student-athletes, a lack of academic achievement,

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full schedules, and a lack of rigorous academic opportunities. Even when engaged, Black male student-athletes notice when educators do not treat them equitably and do not push them to their academic potential (Singer, 2016).

Academic Clustering

Academic clustering further highlights the different academic experiences of Black male student-athletes, particularly because clustering often occurs in revenue generating sports where Black males are overrepresented. Navarro (2015) defined academic clustering as a process in which practitioners advise student-athletes to pursue a common academic major. Fountain and Finley (2011) first researched this topic by examining the game-day programs of various DI institutions. The authors found that, for many revenue generating sports teams (e.g., football, men's basketball, and in some cases women's basketball) the majority of student-athletes had academic clustered majors, where more than 25% of the team were enrolled in the same major (Fountain & Finley, 2011).

Case et al. (2017) built a quantitative survey to explore the experiences of student-athlete academic advisors with a focus on their experiences with academic clustering. The authors distributed the instrument to 97 academic advisors of student-athletes. The respondents indicated clustering did take place, at times clustering could be positive (i.e., if athletes were clustering in academic challenging majors that piqued their interest like Sports Management), and clustering occurred no matter the racial background of the athletes. However, the authors did note the student-athlete academic advisors said the clustering was more prominent in revenue-generating sports, which is overrepresented by Black male student-athletes (Case et al., 2017). Coaches can be a pivotal turning point for over-representation in specific majors for varsity student-athletes, by allowing these athletes to develop and pursue their own academic interests rather than being

tracked into specific academic programs to allow for maximum time with their athletic responsibilities.

Faculty

The literature provides several examples of the positive role university faculty play in shaping the experiences of student-athletes while in college (Kamusoko & Pemberton, 2013). Retting and Hu (2016) noted in their findings high-profile athletes scored much higher than non-athletes in the impact of faculty-student interactions on their academic experiences. Similarly, Rankin et al. (2016) explored the academic success of student-athletes and found that engagement with faculty was one of two statistically significant factors leading to student-athlete academic identity development. Gayles and Hu (2009) shared similar findings, stating interactions with faculty and involvement in academic related activities were positively associated with learning and communication skills reported by student-athletes. This is most likely because having strong connections with faculty decreases athletic identity, which allows student-athletes to explore other aspects of their college experience, specifically academic opportunities (Rankin et al., 2016).

The role of faculty in the academic experiences of Black men is just as crucial (Baker & Hawkins, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015). Comeaux (2008) used Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) data to explore the experience of 739 Black male student-athletes from a variety of institutional types across all three Divisions and found when connected with faculty, these student-athletes were engaged academically, were more likely to persist through graduation, and applied to graduate school. Similarly, Baker and Hawkins (2016) noted the positive role faculty play in Black male student-athlete achievement, particularly for their career advancement and life transitions. For instance, the authors noted how structured faculty

mentorship programs positively impacts the academic experiences of all student-athletes, but particularly Black men (Baker & Hawkins, 2016).

Differences in relationships with faculty can also complicate the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes. Comeaux and Harrison (2007) have explored this topic for over a decade and noted the important role college faculty play in the Black male student-athlete academic experience, finding Black male student-athletes will not ask for help from faculty for fear of being stereotyped as a 'dumb jock'. When exploring the feelings of white faculty, Comeaux (2011) surveyed 464 faculty members and found white faculty had statistically significant differences in their expectations for white and Black male student-athletes. The faculty involved in the study expected Black student-athletes to have lower motivation, lower test scores, and be less engaged in class. Harrison et al. (2006) reported similar findings when they utilized CIRP data and found faculty had higher academic expectations for white student-athletes and thus the faculty engaged with these athletes more. To reverse these negative trends, the authors felt faculty needed to play a more central role in the Black male student-athlete academic experience.

Academic stereotypes held by faculty against Black male student-athletes was explored by Simiyu (2012), who utilized both Student Involvement Theory and Critical Race Theory to examine the challenges Black male student-athletes face on campus. The author reported six findings, two of which were a lack of faculty-student-interaction and faculty stereotypes having a negative impact on the Black male student-athlete academic experience. Furthermore, lack of expectations from faculty from the beginning, the inability to create their own schedule, and the lack of support from university staff all play a critical role in the relationships between Black male student-athletes and faculty (Adler & Adler, 1985; Benson, 2000).

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University Administrators

While the role of university administrators is not specific only to Black male student-athletes, administrators (in student services, academic advising, and university athletics administration) play a significant role in the student-athlete academic experience (Navarro & McCormick, 2017; Nite, 2012; Rankin et al., 2016) Athletic personnel, when invested in the student-athlete academic experience, can have a positive impact on this experience (Rankin et al., 2016). Nite (2012) stated that athletic-departments have a responsibility to help student-athletes' academic success in the same ways they support their athletic success. One of the main places we see this commitment to student-athlete academic success is with large academic services departments, where student-athletes find academic resources, complete assignments, and discuss their majors with academic counselors (Navarro & McCormick, 2017). In some cases, this increased involvement of academic counselors led to higher overall student-athlete graduation rates (Huml, 2018). Navarro (2015) also notes the role student affairs and academic support staff can have on student-athlete career choices. By involving student-athletes in programs outside of athletics, these individuals engage student-athletes in their academic pursuits and increase their academic identity (Navarro, 2015). This role played by academic counselors, athletic mentors, and athletic administrators can influence student-athlete major selection and impact high-profile student-athlete academic pursuits (Navarro, 2015; Retting & Hu, 2016).

Athletic Coaches

A focus on the role of the coach in the college experiences of Black male student-athletes emerged in the late 1980s. Adler and Adler (1985), a team of sociologists, spent significant time with a men's basketball team and reported on the experiences of the coaches and student-athletes. They noted many significant findings, but particularly the negative impact of coaches

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organizing student-athletes' academic schedules, which resulted in the student-athletes becomes less academically engaged due to not choosing their own courses (Adler & Adler, 1985). Benson (2000) also found the role of the coach was important in Black male student-athletes' goal setting and academic expectations. This study is important because prior to its completion, there had been little research on this topic from the athletes' perspective. The author noted coaches did not push these athletes to achieve academically, did not reward them for their academic achievements, and were focused on their own athletic interests (Benson, 2000).

The role of the coach is described by Feltz et al. (2013) who, at the conclusion of their study, found coaches make a significant difference in academic identity development of student-athletes. The authors found if the coach emphasized academics, student-athletes have an increased academic identity (Feltz et al., 2013). As Feltz et al. (2013) summarized, "With the dumb jock stereotype ubiquitous in higher education, especially in high profile athletic programs, the coach can be a strong influential source to not only shape physical attributes, but also to influence academic and athletic identification" (p. 196).

More recent literature has noted the distinct role of the coach in the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes. Sinclair and Bennett (2015) stated, "While the overall objective of the coach is to ensure they recruit talented players, they are unable to forget the overall objectives promoted by their respective school are to educate, matriculate and graduate students" (p. 183). Kelly et al. (2015) concluded their book chapter on the importance of faculty engagement with Black male student-athletes by noting coaches have a critical role to play in creating an environment that encourages academic support. Harrison et al. (2015) noted that administrators (including coaches) play a role in how Black male student-athletes conceptualize their academic ability. If the student-athlete is praised for doing their work, the authors asserted,

they will have a more specific focus on their academic pursuits. The authors further argued acknowledgement should not only come from academic advisors, but also from position and head coaches.

Cooper (2016) outlined six steps to support the academic identity of Black male student-athletes, one of which centered on mentorship. The author asserts the role of the coach is important in Black male student-athlete identity development and growth, since the coach serves as a critical mentor for all student-athletes, in part due to the amount of time coaches spend with their student-athletes (Cooper, 2016). Finally, Cooper et al. (2019) called for coaches to be more involved in creating cultural uplift programs for Black male college student-athletes. These programs should center on their racial identity, which would help their academic pursuits and dispel myths around their athletic identity taking precedent. The authors concluded by highlighting that, within the academic support services, coaches are an important resource for academic achievement of Black male student-athletes (Gayles et al., 2015).

Coach-Athlete Relationship

For student-athletes, the time demands associated with playing a sport means their environment is most often centered around athletics and thus the majority of their time is spent with their athletic coaches (Sandstorm et al., 2016; Watt, 2001). To better understand the coach-athlete relationship, this review will explore the literature on the 3C+1 model developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004). This model is one of the few that explores the dynamic of the coach-athlete relationship and does so through looking at the experience from the lens of the athlete. This empowerment of the subject being studied is a critical component to narrative research, and this this model best presents a clear method for this particular study. To better understand the coach-athlete relationship, this review will explore the literature on the models

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developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) intended to highlight key components of interactions between student-athletes and their athletic coaches: the 3C model and the 3C+1 model. The review will begin by exploring empirical research on the coach-athlete relationship before taking a more in-depth look into several components of the 3C model+1: closeness, commitment, and co-orientation.

Empirical Research on the Coach-Athlete Relationship

The earliest methods used to explore the coach-athlete relationship were informed by qualitative case studies that yielded quantitative measurement scales (Cote et al., 1999). Cote et al. (1999) utilized two phases and 205 athletes to validate the Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S), one of the earliest scales used to explore the coaching perspective of the coach-athlete relationship. This model proved to be beneficial for understanding the role of the coach in coach-athlete relationships but did not provide a framework for understanding the role of the athlete. Noting this shortcoming, Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) conducted two separate studies with British professional athletes to validate the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q). Rooted in interdependence theory, this framework was the first tool used to explore both the coach and athlete perspective within the coach-athlete dyad.

The creation and validation of the CART-Q led to the development of the 3C model for studying coach-athlete relationships. This model is appropriate for this study since it highlights the experience of the athlete in relationship to their coach within each component of the framework. Three aspects of the coach-athlete relationship emerged from the development of the CART-Q scale: closeness (emotions), co-orientation (cognitions) and complementarity (behaviors). Commitment was later added to the model based on an understanding of the time spent with coaches and how this commitment could further enhance or hinder the coach-athlete

relationship. This addition of another component indicates how the model is nimble and adapted after initial validation stages.

This work led to a standard definition of the coach-athlete relationship: "a state in which a coach and an athlete's thoughts of commitment, feelings of closeness and complementarity behaviors are mutually interdependent" (Jowett et al., 2017, p. 144). The COMPASS Model emerged as another tool to explore the coach-athlete relationship, which led to the development of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Maintenance (CARM-Q) scale (Rhind & Jowett, 2010; Rhind & Jowett, 2012). This scale, also rooted in qualitative interviews with both coaches and athletes, sought to better understand how the coach-athlete relationship is maintained over time. The model initially had 50 items and was reduced to 28 and 7 sub-scales after validation from 212 coaches and athletes taking the instrument. However, the CART-Q and 3C framework have been consistently used to empirically explore this topic.

Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) face critiques on how their model has not been used to specifically explore the experiences of college student-athletes, especially the experience of Black student-athletes. Many studies that have used the 3C model have focused on professional sports and often dyad relationships. Jowett and Frost (2007) did explore the experiences of Black athletes in England, but these were soccer players and not college student-athletes. Jowett et al. (2017) continued to explore the 3C model in various cultural contexts by exploring the coach-athlete relationship in five different cultural settings. Again, despite looking at various cultural experiences, this model did not specifically address the experience of Black college student-athletes and their relationships with their coaches.

Despite there being critiques and shortcomings in these models, the literature often references each as a foundational framework for exploring both the college student experience

and the coach-athlete relationship. Therefore, for this particular study, Astin's I-E-O model and the 3C +1 model have been intertwined to better understand the role of the coach on the experiences of Black college student-athletes. The framework presented below highlights the conceptual model used for this research.

3C+1 Model

There are four components within the 3C+1 framework used to study the coach-athlete relationship. The first three were developed in the initial validation of the 3C model and the final stage emerged from various studies. *Closeness* is the emotional center of the coach-athlete relationship and reflects the extent to which both coaches and athletes are connected and the depths of their attachments, best reflected as interpersonal feelings (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002; Jowett, 2017). *Co-orientation* refers to the similar views and opinions both coaches and athletes have as a part of their relationship. This is rooted in effective communication and explains how coaches and athletes share experiences, knowledge, thoughts, values, and concerns, seen through a level of interdependence (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002; Jowett, 2017). *Commitment* is centered on coaches and athletes maintaining a close, personal relationship over time despite triumphs and challenges and is best seen through interpersonal thoughts (Jowett, 2017). *Complementarity* is an interaction that the coach and athlete perceive as cooperative. These acts tend to aid the performance of the athlete and is best reflected in interpersonal behaviors (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002; Jowett, 2017). Since complementarity specifically relates to athletic competition and the focus of this study is on the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes and the role of their coaches in these experiences, this concept will not be further explored throughout this literature review. The following sections instead focus on the three components of the model (closeness, commitment, and co-orientation) that are critical to the specific context of

understanding coach-athlete relationships and academic experiences of Black male student-athletes.

Closeness

Closeness is the first component of the 3C model, and specifically focuses on the communication, connection, and comradery developed between the coach-athlete dyad (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). This connection through communication, support dissent, and mental health is explored in this portion of the literature review.

Effective Communication. One key aspect of a close coach-athlete relationship is effective communication. Over time, effective communication leads to positive outcomes in areas such as conflict management, building trusting relationships, and building relationship confidence (Davis et al., 2019; Kassim & Broadley, 2018; Wachsmuth et al., 2018). Lisinskiene (2018) worked with a group of 10 coaches who coach international youth sports over a 6-month period to better communicate with athletes. The study found that after participating, coaches noted a positive impact and significant change in their approach in their interpersonal skills with athletes. Davis et al. (2019) utilized two separate studies to better understand communication satisfaction of coaches and athletes. The second was a longitudinal examination of communication strategies over a six-week period. The authors found conflict management strategies, motivation, and support were positively associated with effective motivational communication from coaches. This led to player satisfaction, a high level of trust, respect, appreciation, and commitment.

Wachsmuth et al. (2018) also examined conflict management strategies as part of effective communication in the coach-athlete relationship. These researchers utilized qualitative case studies from 22 athlete and non-athlete participants to examine how both implicitly and

explicitly try to avoid conflict. They found implicitly, players often actively listen to coaches and teammates, obliging to their requests to avoid conflicts. Explicitly, both coaches and athletes look to avoid conflict by consistently communicating expectations and freely giving feedback (Wachsmuth et al., 2018). This feedback loop should be established early in coach-athlete relationships to assist with positive communication (Davis et al., 2019). Doing so leads to more trusting, committed, and cooperative relationships between athletes and coaches. Kassim and Boardley (2018) found if coaches were perceived by their athletes as good communicators in sharing confidence, competence, connection, and character there was a positive significant relationship in athlete performance. Working with a sample of over 600 athletes from six team and individual sports, the importance of role of the coach as a good communicator was particularly telling because the study was conducted in varied cultural team settings (one in the UK and one in Malaysia). Each setting yielded similar findings despite being examined in different cultural lenses. This study, in combination with the other findings, highlights effective communication as a skill that can be enhanced with practice and is important because it details how effective communication can impact the coach-athlete relationship.

Supporting Athletes Through Transitions. Another aspect of developing close relationships between coaches and athletes is supporting athletes through life transitions. These transitions include student-athletes starting college, managing their new athletic responsibilities and the transition out of sports at the end of their college career. To better understand the academic transitions of student-athletes, Hicks et al. (2016) examined the role high-school football coaches played for five Black male student-athletes as they transitioned to a DI institution. The authors used critical race theory to highlight how close relationships with coaches impacted Black male student-athlete academic success in the transition from high-school

to college. In fact, the relationships with their coaches played a part in their recruiting process and in the student-athletes developing their academic identity. The student-athletes in this study noted selecting their institution due to their high-school coaches describing the academic opportunities on campus.

Similarly, Bjornsen and Dinkel (2017) utilized Schlossberg's Transition Theory to describe the role of the coach in the student-athletes' transition to and through college. Through interviewing 14 coaches of different DI varsity athletic teams, the authors found coaches stated they were a key part of the transition, but that student-athletes needed to learn more about future options earlier in their athletic careers. In both instances, the key common element is these coaches noted the role they played in student-athlete development outside of athletics.

Dissent. There are also aspects of closeness that negatively impact the coach-athlete relationship. The most prevalent in the literature is dissent amongst athletes. Kassing and Anderson (2014) examined how 73 former high school and college athletes from across the country expressed dissent with their coaches, what made them express this dissent, and at what periods they expressed dissent. The researchers found athletes with more perceived power are more likely to express dissent. Furthermore, these same athletes felt their dissent began before they expressed it, citing that a poor relationship with their coach and poor communication impacted their want to complete tasks (Kassing & Anderson, 2014).

Mental Health. The role of the coach generally focuses on motivation and success, not student-athlete mental health. However, a growing body of research is focused on student-athlete mental health (Powers et al., 2020; Uphill et al., 2016). Though important, the role of the coach does not often focus on supporting student-athlete mental health challenges, in part due to the times coaches are the root cause of student-athlete mental distress. Recently, Powers et al. (2020)

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combined survey tools to examine the coach-athlete relationship, student-athlete mental health, and positive and negative elements of health. This study worked with 79 participants at a DI institution and found the coach-athlete relationship was more predictively powerful than both gender and personality in predicting depression and psychological well-being. Thus, having a negative relationship with a coach could further impact more than athletic success.

The first "C" in the 3C model, closeness, is an important part in the coach-athlete relationship. This literature provides examples of how through effective communication, support during transition, student-athlete dissent, and student-athlete mental health, coaches can play a positive or negative role in developing a close relationship with their athletes. This relationship can impact athletes' experiences both inside and outside of their sport. However, the literature does not provide specific examples of how the close relationship of coaches with athletes can assist in Black male student-athlete academic engagement.

Commitment

This section examines how commitment in the coach-athlete relationship is explored throughout the literature. In this study, commitment is focused on coaches and athletes having a relationship over time, interlaced with the triumphs and challenges that comes with athletic success and failure (Jowett, 2017). Aspects of both committed and non-committed relationships will be examined through studies on student-athlete burnout, time spent with coaches, increased student-athlete motivation, coaching turnover, and the lack of institutional commitment to both coaches and student-athletes.

Student-Athlete Burnout. There is significant literature on how committed coach-athlete relationships specifically address the reduction of athlete burnout, increased positive interaction with coaches, and increased motivation among athletes. When a relationship is

strong, coaches push athletes without reducing the athletes' commitment to the coach or their sport (Davis et al., 2019; Isoard-Gautheur et al., 2015). McGee and Defreese (2019) shared these findings when studying 37 women rowers at a DI institution, noting athletes who indicated they were more committed to their coaches reported less burnout, were more engaged, and felt closer to their coaches.

The impact of burnout is also seen in setting and achieving goals. According to their research, Isoard-Gautheur et al. (2015) studied the experience of 359 international athletes and found the committed coach-athlete relationships saw a reduction in stress, emotional exhaustion, and fatigue. Conversely, the student-athlete participants placed a higher value in their sport and had a higher sense of accomplishment (Isoard-Gautheur et al., 2015). Davis et al. (2018) used both physiological and cognitive tests to determine how the coach-athlete relationship impacts commitment. Working with 82 male and female international athletes, the authors utilized structural equation modeling and found effective coach-athlete communication reduced athlete anxiety, leading to a better relationship with their coach which was positively associated with less exhaustion and burnout.

Despite positive aspects of commitment leading to reduced athlete burnout, the impact of non-committed coach-athlete relationships can lead to physical exhaustion and athlete burnout. Through examining the psychophysiological outcomes from the coach-athlete relationship via saliva tests and cognitive assessments, Davis et al. (2018) found that a negative relationship was connected to a negative athletic and academic performance. This included increased stress, anxiety, burnout, and lower performance on cognitive exercises. Additionally, the more anxious an athlete, the worse the coach-athlete relationship. Davis and Jowett (2014) found that negative attachment styles are more likely to lead to stress and anxiety in the coach-athlete relationship.

As noted in previous research, increased anxiety and burnout can lead to a decreased well-being, mental stress, and thus a reduced academic performance (Hicks et al., 2016).

Time Spent with Coaches. Having a committed coach-athlete relationship is impacted by the amount of time student-athletes spend with their coach. Research highlights student-athletes generally spend a minimum of 20 hours a week with their coaches and often additional time in workouts, film study, and weightlifting (Cooper et al., 2017). Thus, research describing how this time positively contributes to committed coach-athlete relationships is warranted. Sandstorm et al. (2016) surveyed seasoned professional athletes exploring the coaches during their athletic careers. Exploring over 20 coach-athlete relationships, the authors utilized narrative inquiry and found athletes were able to develop deeper relationships with coaches they maintained for years, particularly in individual sports. These findings highlighted how prolonged relationship led to both the coaches and athletes being committed to one another, both inside and outside athletics. Furthermore, the more time they spent with a coach, their commitment to each other increased, they became closer and developed complementary teaching and learning styles (Sandstorm et al., 2016).

Increased Motivation. Research tells us committed coach-athlete relationships also lead to increased athlete motivation. Jowett et al. (2017) utilized self-determination theory to examine motivation of 756 British, Chinese, French, Swedish, and Greek athletes. Their work found a positive coach-athlete relationship predicted higher levels of basic needs satisfaction, self-determination, and motivation amongst all athletes, regardless of their cultural group. This finding is particularly poignant when considering the experiences of Black male student-athletes and comparing their experiences to their non-Black peers. Davis and Jowett (2014) received feedback from 192 athletes and utilized attachment theory to examine positive and negative

attachment style with their coaches. Via structural equation modeling, this quantitative study found positive attachment styles led to more positive relationships with coaches and less stress and anxiety. This reduction of stress and anxiety led to more motivated athletes who benefited from a more committed relationship with their coaches including increased social support, relationship depth, and interpersonal connection (Davis & Jowett, 2014).

Coach Turnover. Not having a consistent coach negatively impacts student-athlete commitment and continual hiring of new coaches has a negative impact on athletes' athletic, social, and academic experience. For student-athletes, the stress associated with coach changes can impact their social experiences, academic lives, and their psychological well-being thus slowing their academic development and athletic performance (Pate et al., 2011). Shipherd et al. (2019) explored how coach turnover impacts team states, team dynamics, and program culture through interviewing 21 student-athletes and two staff members at a prominent DI institution. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) the authors stated when hiring a new coach, hiring managers should consider whether the coach is a "good fit" for the individual player and team culture in order to have a positive environmental impact. When this is not the case, research indicates connecting with a new coach can be more difficult since returning student-athletes are not as close or committed in the early stages of this new relationship (Shipherd et al., 2019). This negative relationship impacts student-athletes both in and out of competition, particularly their academic experience. Pate et al. (2011) explored this idea when they examined four college football juniors at the university of Tennessee-Knoxville, a prominent DI program with high coach turnover (i.e., three new coaches in four years). Each time a new coach was hired, a new philosophy, approach, and changes in workout schedules were introduced, resulting in stress for the student-athletes. This stress grew due to having to

establish a relationship with a new coach who is perceived to be more committed to the new

athletes they recruit than former players on larger teams.

The commitment component of the 3C model further illustrates the complexity of the

coach-athlete relationship. This literature provides important insight into how student-athlete

burnout, time spent with coaches, increased motivation, and coaching turnover can impact both

student-athletes' and coaches' commitment to each other and their institution. Despite noting

these important factors, the literature does not specifically explore how Black male student-

athletes are impacted by this commitment to each other or how this commitment may impact

spheres outside of athletics. Therefore, an understanding of these topics is worth exploring.

Co-Orientation

Co-orientation relates specifically to values, both shared and fractured values, of coaches

and athletes. Shared values are defined as thoughts and personal practices where both coaches

and student-athletes are in agreement (Jowett & Frost, 2007). Fractured values are defined as

places where coaches and athletes are both aware the other does not believe in the same personal

practices, often leading to dissent (Kassing & Anderson, 2014).

Shared Values. Shared values within the coach-athlete co-orientation leads to a positive

coach-athlete relationship. Jowett and Frost (2007) interviewed twelve Black European soccer

players and analyzed their experiences via the 3C+1 framework. The authors found Black soccer

players in Europe noted, despite often having white coaches, they felt heard, respected,

supported and valued throughout their athletic experiences. This respect was a key component of

having a positive relationship with their coach. Coaches in this scenario shared how they valued

the players' lived experiences, and thus wanted to ensure the players' personal development was

a factor in their coaching style (Jowett & Frost, 2007). Similarly, Steinfeldt et al. (2011)

examined shared values through interviewing 10 college football coaches who explored concepts of masculinity with their student-athletes. Through interviews, the researchers sought to understand how coaches conceptualized masculinity and shared these concepts with players. This study found the role of assistant coaches was important, coaches play a role outside of athletics in athletes' lives, and when coaches' understanding of masculinity was one that co-oriented with players' concepts, their relationship was viewed as more positive by both players and coaches (Steinfeldt et al., 2011).

Fractured Values. Conversely, negative co-orientation in the coach-athlete relationship is exhibited in coaches and athletes who have fractured values (i.e., not sharing the same personal and athletic values). In the same context of their study of Black soccer players, Jowett and Frost (2007) noted the challenges that come when coaches and players do not share similar values. Specifically, the researchers described how the relationship with non-Black peers was not supported by coaches, leading to fractured relationships and a lack of team chemistry. Black players also noted that their white peers were treated differently by their coaches, causing friction in team cohesion, leading to resentment, and negatively impacting team dynamics (Jowett & Frost, 2007). This lack of cohesion is also seen by Black athletes in the lack of representation in coaching. Particularly in DI varsity sports, institutions do not often hire Black head coaches despite having a significant number of Black players in DI varsity sports. Ageymang and DeLome (2010) used critical race theory to examine the role of Black head coaches and how not having a pipeline of these coaches, particularly in college, can impact the goal-setting of student-athletes. This lack of Black coaches is also, most often, connected to systemic challenges in developing young coaching talent in sports (Lapchick, 2020). Having

Black coaches often means having mentors who are connected to their long-term success after sports.

Similarly, to closeness and commitment, co-orientation is an important component of the coach-athlete relationship. Having shared values allows coach-athlete dyads to have better communication, feel respected, and feel supported. Conversely, having fractured values leads to athletes feeling devalued, ignored, and resentful of their coaches. Despite focusing on Black males in their research, the literature does not specifically explore the experiences of Black male college student-athletes and how having effective co-orientation with their coaches will impact their athletic identity. Therefore, a gap in the literature remains.

In conclusion, the coach-athlete relationship is a critical component to the athlete experience. However, the 3C+1 model does not specifically explore the role of the coach in the Black male student-athlete academic experience. Despite the model providing the closeness, commitment, and co-orientation frames to understand the coach-relationship, the lack of specific data related to how Black male student-athletes conceptualize their academic identities through working with their coaches leaves room for further exploration.

Chapter Summary

This chapter includes an overview of the literature pertinent to understanding the experiences of Black male student-athletes and the role of the athletic coach in their identity development. The review began with an overview of Black identity development to provide a foundation on how Black people conceptualize their identity. Within the research, Black identity is often portrayed as a deficit in the literature, which is problematic because this deficit lens fails to account for the complexity of their experiences as they navigate college life.

Next, an overview of three factors (i.e., campus type, sport type, gender) commonly cited in the literature that influence athletic identity development were discussed, included how a strong athletic identify impacts an athlete's GPA, graduation rate, identity foreclosure, and career maturity. The research analyzed in this section demonstrated how a strong athletic identity is associated with DI varsity sports, which is central to the setting of the proposed study Further, the literature presented in this section showed how the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes are shaped by their athletic identity.

The third strand of literature included an exploration and analysis of literature relevant to the factors that known to influence the academic experiences of Black male student-athletes. Factors identified by researchers within this field included the role of family, the campus racial and academic environment, and relationships with university faculty, administrators, and athletic coaches. This literature highlights the complexity of the Black male student-athlete experience; they must navigate stereotypes associated with their racial identity and athletic identity as they adjust to college life. This strand of literature concluded with a critical, yet poignant explanation on the role coaches can play in impacting Black male student-athlete academic development. Finally, the coach-athlete relationship was explored through the lens of the 3C+1 model (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Specifically, the impact of closeness, commitment, and co-orientation on the student-athlete experience was discussed. Notably, there is a gap in literature where Black male student-athlete narratives can be used to explore the role of the coach in the experiences of Black males participating in DI varsity sports, and thus why this is a topic worth exploring.

Finally, the coach-athlete relationship was explored through the lens of the 3C+1 model (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Specifically, the impact of closeness, commitment, and co-orientation on the student-athlete experience was discussed. Notably, there is a gap in literature

where Black male student-athlete narratives can be used to explore the role of the coach in the experiences of Black males participating in DI varsity sports, and thus why this is a topic worth exploring. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will provide an outline of the narrative research paradigm, why it is an appropriate methodology for this particular study, and the specific research methods that will be used which are rooted in narrative approaches.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter will outline the methods used to conduct a narrative qualitative study of the storied experiences of Black male college student-athletes and the role of their coaches in their identity development. The chapter will begin with an overview of qualitative research, detailing why qualitative methods are best positioned to explore this research topic. Next, the chapter will highlight why narrative inquiry is the best tool to explore this particular set of research questions. The chapter will then give detailed outline of how data will be collected, analyzed, and protected. A specific summary of the sampling process, trustworthiness of the data and the researcher positionality will also be shared. Finally, the chapter will end with a review of the research questions, limitations, delimitations, and address any ethical issues.

For this particular study, the identified research problem details the experience of African American male student-athletes is rooted in systemic barriers to academic success. This limited academic success is coupled with neoliberal athletic capitalistic values and a hostile racial climate that each conflict with the mission of higher education (Gayles et al., 2018). Noting this problem, the purpose of the study is to explore how the student-athlete coach relationship impacts Black male student-athlete athletic and academic identity development. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who play a Division I varsity sport?

2. How do race and gender intersect and shape athletic, social, and academic identity formation for Black male student-athletes in Division I varsity sports?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between Black male athletes and their coach, particularly in navigating academic and athletic identities and domains in Division I varsity sports?

Qualitative Research: An Overview

Qualitative research is a methodological approach used to answer critical, complicated and important research questions (Atkinson et al., 2001; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state qualitative research is exploring things in their natural settings and attempting to interpret the studied subject in a way that brings meaning to the researcher. Qualitative research often includes specific characteristics that are important for the liberation and democratization of the research subjects (Saldana, 2013). Often, this form of research involves the active participation from the subject being researched (Creswell, 2013). This active involvement in the research process is a key cornerstone of qualitative techniques, giving a voice to the voiceless (Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013). Additionally, the role of the research is an important component of qualitative research, and the researcher must consider their personal assumptions and research lens when exploring their research topic. The researcher must note this lens as a place for potential bias, and actively force yourself to work against this potential bias.

In the first editorial in their *Qualitative Research Journal*, Atkinson et al. (2001) described the role qualitative research has in our current epistemology acknowledging qualitative research is beginning to be utilized more as a valid research method. Creswell (2013) further highlights this point noting qualitative research is a tool; for exploring theological frameworks and assigned assumptions using deductive tools to derive themes that emerge from data. As Creswell notes, qualitative findings emerge from the data through using holistic approaches, going beyond a linear framework to take a deep-dive into the stories, lived experiences and cases people live

daily (Clandinin, 2013). Specifically, Creswell, focuses on the process of conducting research more than the outcomes of said research findings. This focus uses inductive approaches to explore topics and involve the researcher as an instrument in the research process (Clandinin, 2013; Creswell, 2013). Because the success of Black male student-athletes is often overlooked or viewed from an outside perspective, a qualitative exploration of these students' personal lived experiences will provide a more complete picture of their college experience, particularly when exploring a relationship that is often overlooked, their relationship with their coach (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007; Feltz et al., 2013; Gayles et al., 2015).

Creswell (2013) often references five qualitative research approaches: narrative analysis, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Each carries a specific ontological, epistemological and axiological framework, which dictates the approach that best addresses your research. Due to this study focusing on the stories of Black male student-athletes and how their relationships with their coaches shape their identities, a narrative approach will best address the assigned research questions.

Narrative Inquiry

At its core, narrative inquiry is about telling stories (Clandinin, 2013). It is a relational form of inquiry that begins at the end of a story, seeking to retell it from the source (Clandinin, 2013). The relational aspect of narrative inquiry is critical in the proposed study because not only do we need to capture the rich, thick description needed to allow for qualitative findings and adequate data analysis, but also this study will add to the literature the stories Black male student-athletes have to tell, especially about their coach-athlete relationships and identity. Narrative analysis is a qualitative research design that utilizes stories to capture the rich, thick description participants share of their lives related to a specific phenomenon. Narrative

researchers explore research questions with a focus on stories from individuals or groups (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2013). Through qualitative research data collection methods, including interviews, observations and content analysis, the narratives shared by participants will fill a void left by quantitative approaches and numerical data, providing a deep-dive into the research participants' lived experiences. Understanding the stories and lived experiences of Black student-athletes is a needed contribution to the literature (Comeaux, 2011).

Creswell (2013) notes narratives are a combination of interdisciplinary lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods centered on the experiences shared by those who lived them. As a form connected to qualitative frameworks, these stories often focus on the oppressed, the wounded, the unheard and the marginalized within our communities (Clandinin, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

With a reputation for liberating the oppressed and unheard, researchers using narrative inquiry explore sensitive topics, events, cultures, social circumstances, health, and other stories that emerge from the human experience (Squire et al., 2014). Due to this study focusing on the experiences of Black male student-athletes, narrative inquiry provides a unique way to capture the stories surrounding how their relationship with their coaches shapes their academic experiences.

As a growing area of study that provides creative solutions to complex research questions, narrative inquiry is a model for policy implementation (Squire et al., 2014). The stories of student-athletes are often complex and center on their success in competition. Using narrative inquiry to explore this topic allows researchers and readers to connect with student-athlete stories and how coaches can impact more than a student-athletes athletic performance. The complexity of studying the coach-athlete relationship is constantly evolving, just like

narrative techniques. Understanding narrative methods helps validate this approach and share why it is appropriate for this study (Clandinin, 2013).

Within narrative inquiry, three dimensions or "spaces" are often explored: interaction (both social and personal), continuity (past, present, and future); and situation (a notion of place or context). Within the interaction space, both personal and social interactions play a role in narrative inquiry. Personal interactions focus on internal conditions, feelings, and hopes. Social interactions consider the environment with other people and the feelings that come from those interactions (Clandinin, 2013). Continuity centers on how stories are told over time. Participants share information about their past by looking backwards to share stories from previous experiences. In the present, participants detail their current experiences and how it shapes their stories. In the future, participants anticipate what their stories will be based on previous experiences. The situation focuses on the context, time, and place within a setting; and how these items impact the participants' interactions with varying points of view. For the purposes of this study, both continuity and situation will be used to explore the coach-athlete relationship. The ability to understand the stories of the coach-athlete relationship development over time as well as the context of these relationships will be critical to understanding how these relationships have impacted African American male student-athletes academic and athletic identity development.

Research Methods

Setting

The sample included participants from three institutions. The first is Elite University, a R1 private doctoral university in the South. This particular campus is PWI serving over 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Black male-student-athletes often have higher graduation rates compared to their Black male peers at other institutions. The institution has a proud athletic

history, competing for championships in a variety of varsity sports. The next setting is the University of the South, a R1 public research university located in the South. With over 30,000 students (graduate and undergraduate), this institution has a long history of dedication back to the state. The Black male student-athlete experience is complex due to high achievement but also recent academic scandal. This institution also has a proud athletic history, sending hundreds of students to compete in professional leagues upon leaving the institution. The final research site is HBCU Pride, also located in the South. Known for graduating students who focus on their local community and health professions, this institution currently enrolls just over 3,400 students, and has a growing athletic program that aspires to graduate students to pursue professional academic or athletic goals.

Sample Selection

Participants were be selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling (also referred to as judgement sampling) is a nonrandom technique deliberately selecting a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Patton, 2002; Tongco, 2007). Criterion sampling, which is a form of purposive sampling, involves the researcher outlining a specific criterion which is needed to explore specific research questions (Patton, 2002). For this study criterion sampling was used. For the purposes of the study, the criteria needed for participation were Black male student-athletes who participate in a varsity sport. Due to the specificity of the criteria and utilizing a narrative framework, the sample size was intended to be small (6-8 students) in order to further explore participants' stories and collect the rich, thick description detailed in their narratives (Clandinin, 2013; Creswell, 2013).

Study participants were selected from varsity teams and needed be currently enrolled at the research site maintaining a full course load. For the purposes of this study, an understanding

of the relationship with the coach was not critical when selecting participants. Though this topic will be explored, a broad understanding of the relationship is highlighted in the participants narratives. Participant recruitment relied on key campus stakeholders (faculty and athletic staff) within the university setting to share information with various varsity athletic teams that met the specific racial, gender, and academic parameters. An email was sent asking for an initial meeting with partners in university administration. This meeting was held to outline the scope and seek to build relationships with key stakeholders. After this initial connection and meeting, a broad message written by the researcher was sent on the researcher's behalf by campus partners to varsity sports student-athletes at two research sites who met the research criteria. From this initial communication, six study participants were identified. A seventh participant was added when one of the study participants noted they had a peer who had an interest in participating in the study.

Securing consent consisted of participants meeting with the researcher and getting an overview of the components of the study to build trust. This overview included the importance of the study, the duration of the study, and the need to protect participant privacy. This privacy was maintained through limited discussion of the research outside of the research sites and with research participants. All data collected was stored on an individually assigned personal password laptop with data encrypted file storage system.

Data Collection

Narrative research details the importance of data collection in line with other forms of impactful qualitative research including interviews, observations and document analysis among others (Creswell, 2013). For this particular study, there were seven participants from three different university campuses. Data collection consisted of interviews, observations, and photo

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elicitation. The participants agreed to participate in the study after receiving outreach from a broad email sent through the athletics listservs and shared by university administrators at both Elite University (by the office of Athletic Academic Advising) and the University of the South (by an athletic academic advisor). Initially, 12 potential participants responded to the initial invite to participate. After an additional outreach email by the researcher to all 12 potential participants, 6 participants responded and indicated they would participate in the study. The final participant from HBCU Pride was recommended to the researcher by a study participant from Elite University. After agreeing to participate, the researcher had an initial meeting to walk through the data collection process and detail the components of the consent form. Participants were told they could share stories about their current head coach, former coaches, or their current position/event coach. After providing these details over Zoom and receiving affirmed consent via signed consent form that was emailed to the researcher from each participant, the researcher set-up a time for interview and gather potential dates for observations. As another form of data collection, the researcher also collected analytic memos at the conclusion of each interview and observation to provide additional context that was coded during data collection.

Interviews

Each participant in this study was interviewed once. The interviews consisted of 13semi-structured interviews and took place on Zoom. The Zoom recordings allowed for additional notes regarding facial expressions and other nuanced observations captured during the interview. The 13 pre-developed questions were divided into four subsections: initial reflection, student-athlete academic experience, student-athlete racial experiences, and exploring the coach-athlete relationship. An effective semi-structured interview process requires follow-up questions be asked if the participant provides insight the researcher feels is worth exploring. In these

interviews, a semi-structured process was used, yielding additional questions for each participant. On average, each interview lasted just under 50 minutes, with the longest being 80 minutes. During the interview, the researcher took notes on each response, making references not only to the verbal answers from to the participants, but to the tone, body language, and nuances from each response. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher replayed the conversations immediately in order to review the captured notes and wrote a brief reflection on each interview detailing key highlights and initial takeaways from each conversation.

The interviews were transcribed by a third-party vendor for speediness and accuracy. After the transcribed interviews were received, the researcher immediately re-listened to the interview and followed the transcription to ensure accuracy. The process of having listened to the interviews on three separate occasions before starting data collection (during the interview, immediately after the interview, and in checking for accuracy from the transcribed interview) added to the validity of the data collection process and provided important context for the researcher to have a quality grasp of the data before starting the coding process.

Observations

Observations were conducted for the participants at Elite University and the University of the South. On one occasion each, the researcher attended events in real time where the participants engaged in their relative sport. This included one football game and one all-day track and field event. At each event, detailed notes were taken on the observations of the interactions of the study participants with their teammates, their coaches, their families, and themselves. Immediately after the event, a memo was written with an initial reaction to what the researcher observed. The observation notes and memos taken immediately after observations were added to the data collection and included in the data coding process.

Photo Elicitation

At the conclusion of the interviews and observations, the researcher messaged the participants' photos the researcher felt captured some component of what had been seen in the data collection process. The participants had the chance to respond to these photos via email with their perspectives. The photos represented a variety of experiences from the participants' past and present, including newspaper articles, high school achievements, and college success. The participants were then given space to reflect on their emotions from seeing the photos. These responses to their reactions were added to the data coding process, and references to these findings are provided throughout the data analysis.

Member Checking

A critical part of the data collection and analysis process is member-checking. To facilitate this, the researcher developed individual google drive folders for all the participants. The researcher then shared key parts of the narrative with the participants, shared how the researcher interpretated these portions of data collection, and asked the participants to share how they interpreted what was initially shared. In many cases, the participants indicated they had not considered examining the data in this way and appreciated a fresh perspective of considering the content. In other cases, the participants clarified what they intended to reflect in what they shared, which impacted the way it is referenced in the findings.

<div align="center">
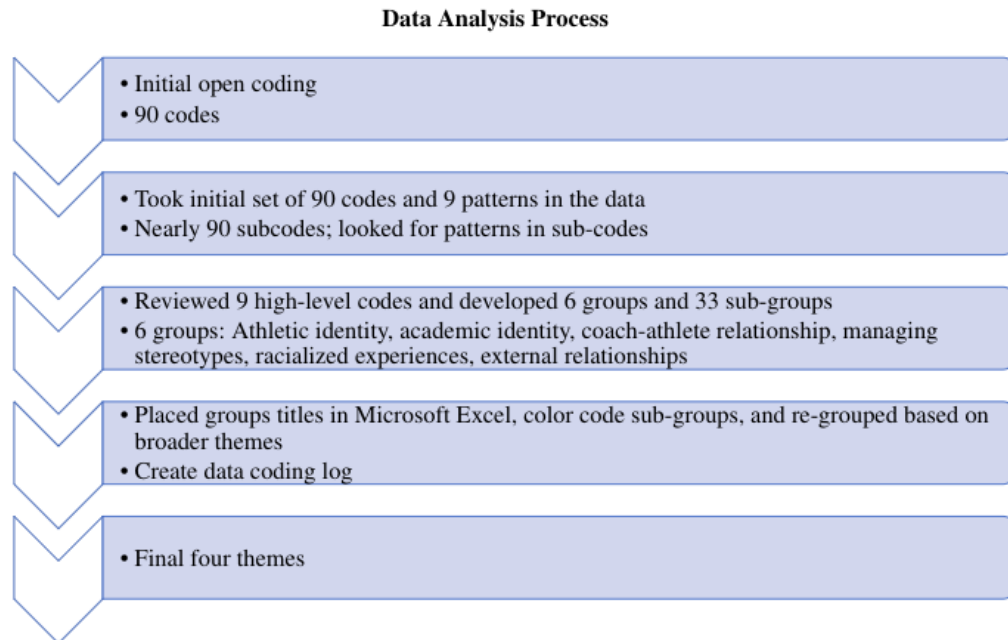
Data Analysis

</div>

The data coding process is a critical component of conducting qualitative research (Clandinin, 2011; Creswell, 2013). In this study, deductive techniques were used as the researcher took all the data that was shared from interviews, observations, and photo elicitation and deduced a set of initial codes. This process of deductive techniques was used due to the

epistemology of the researcher, who believes that reality needs to be interpreted and this interpretation should happen using the best tools. After three review sessions, reading the transcripts and memos on multiple occasions and reviewing the participant feedback from the photo elicitation process, the researcher did an initial round of open coding using NVivo v.14 qualitative data analysis software. This process took place over several days and yielded nine initial high-level patterns. All the data pulled into these nine high-level patterns were once again reviewed and organized into six groups and a total of 33 sub-groups, with an average of just over five per group. The initial groups were: academic experiences, athletic experiences, the coach-athlete relationship, managing stereotypes, racialized experiences and external relationships.

Next the researcher reviewed all the quotes from these groups and subgroups to see what potential trends emerged from the coded data. The researcher then developed an excel sheet that included a table with a summary each group, select representative quotes from the participants that were relevant to the particular group, and any broad trends that seemed to be emerging from the newly formed groups. This process yielded several trends from each group and subgroup. These trends were then placed in various cells in Microsoft Excel and assigned a particular color based on their original codes. The trends from the Microsoft Excel sheet were then organized into four high-level themes that provide the framework for the data analysis for this study. The four themes are: Expectations and Exploitation; Building bonds beyond bondage: The team as a Family; Rewriting the narrative: Thriving despite existing in a culture of anti-Blackness; and Finding Your Voice.

Figure 2

Data Analysis Process

Data Analysis Process

- Initial open coding
- 90 codes

- Took initial set of 90 codes and 9 patterns in the data
- Nearly 90 subcodes; looked for patterns in sub-codes

- Reviewed 9 high-level codes and developed 6 groups and 33 sub-groups
- 6 groups: Athletic identity, academic identity, coach-athlete relationship, managing stereotypes, racialized experiences, external relationships

- Placed groups titles in Microsoft Excel, color code sub-groups, and re-grouped based on broader themes
- Create data coding log

- Final four themes

Trustworthiness

When conducting qualitative research, ensuring the trustworthiness of the data collected is an essential component of the study. One way to increase trustworthiness is to detail the validity and reliability of the data collected and data analysis process. Ensuring validity in qualitative research requires extensive rigor in seeking the rich, thick description needed to ensure data saturation (Creswell, 2013). Researcher self-reflection adds to the validity of research due to the researcher acknowledging the role they play in the data collection process (Creswell, 2013).

Validity and reliability in this particular study was established through a variety of techniques. One is building an extensive literature review on the research topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Additionally, sharing findings, themes and outcomes with the narrator (i.e.,

member checking) also adds to validity of research projects. This should be a continuous process after you conduct interviews, observations and even as you notice data emerging from your findings (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Data triangulation also assists in the validity and reliability process.

Triangulating data involves using multiple forms of data collection and arriving at similar conclusions based on what is shared, observed, or studied (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). What is critical, the authors note, is the need to not only indicate your findings are reliable, but more specifically detail the reliability of your process. According to the literature, reliability is best presented by the work that is done in the literature review, data collection, and data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Sharing your relationship to the topic in the form of a reflexivity statement early in your study also adds to researcher reliability. This statement allows you to highlight the biases you may carry and work to actively address them while conducting research (Creswell, 2013; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Finally, documenting your techniques for analyzing research, including keyword searches and coding personal memos you recorded during the process adds to the reliability of your study.

In this particular study, data triangulation took place in the variety of data collection methods as well as a rigorous member-checking process. The combination of interviews, observations, and photo elicitation is an important component of trustworthiness due to data being collected in different forms. These multiple formats of data collection add nuanced details to participant narratives that could have been missed by only doing one of the data collection methods. The member checking process was also rigorous, with researcher sharing the findings

from data collection and receiving feedback from participants on what should be kept, tweaked, or eliminated from the presentation of the findings.

Positionality Statement

As a lover of college athletics and a Black man, there are several key items that must be highlighted regarding my positionality while conducting this narrative study. First, the stories of Black male student-athletes and their relationships with their coaches has been a personal topic of interest since I began my journey in higher education. My own lived experiences watching peers who participated in athletics in high school, college, and professionally has informed my views on their experience and the relationships with their coaches. This background and closeness to athletics means I carry biases in the ways I have seen and experienced college athletics. These biases are further complicated since my racial and gender identities mirror the individuals I seek to study. Knowing these items going into the research meant I needed to take additional measurers to consider these perspectives as I conducted my research. While these biases cannot be ignored since they are outcomes of my lived experiences, they can be constantly examined throughout the writing process. Through member checking, data saturation and consistent feedback throughout the data collection and analysis processes, I have sought to ensure my positionality has not compromised the findings and recommendations.

Limitations and Delimitations

Noting the limitations and delimitations of your study helps the reader craft their expectations and creates room for additional research (Creswell, 2013). Limitations are defined as potential shortcomings due to the selected methodology, framework or lens with which a research study is conducted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For the purposes of this study, using qualitative inquiry and specifically a narrative approach does present several limitations. Since

the narratives often touch on stories individuals share, some things may be factually difficult to reconceptualize or validate. It is important to remember the role of the researcher is to bring together disparate data points to paint a clear picture for the reader (Clandinin, 2013). This means the reflection may not be as it was originally intended, but it does show parts of what was and is real to the narrator (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Further limitations of narrative inquiry include the research being generalizable to the population, the time commitment needed to understand the themes that emerge in the research, and the ethical responsibility that comes with conducting narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). True narrative researchers are limited by what their narrators share, hoping it is the truth and accurately reflects their experience. Qualitative research having specific biases and limitations should not stop researchers from addressing these research problems from a qualitative lens (Pocwardowski et al., 2006).

Delimitations are factors that restrict the ideas you can explore from your intended research questions (Creswell, 2013). These boundaries are needed to not only conduct effective research, but to share with other researchers' additional topics that should be considered in future research projects (Creswell, 2013). In this particular study, delimitations are linked with the decision to use a narrative approach, the racial identity of the population studied, and the focus on specific teams. Regarding the narrative approach, it is bounded by relying on the recollection of their lived experiences. This comes with a limited scope when presenting research findings, but best addresses the research questions for this particular study. By focusing only on Black students, the study is delimited to their experiences, since there are other student-athletes on college campuses. Finally, by focusing on specific athletic teams at a specific sport, the scope of the study is further limited to the experiences of those student-athletes on those teams. Despite

this, the research site best allows the researcher to have an ethical relationship with the research and thus meet the ethical implications of conducting effective qualitative research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter defined, explored and explained why narrative inquiry is the appropriate research method for these specific research questions. The chapter begins by giving a general overview of qualitative research, moving then into a history of narrative inquiry. It continues by highlighting the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), who are often referenced as the founders of narrative inquiry. The chapter continued by explaining, due to the research questions seeking to tell the stories of student-athletes, a narrative method bet addressed these research questions. The chapter continued with a breakdown of the data collection and data analysis tools that were used to explore this topic. Finally, the chapter concluded with the author addressing ethical issues, outlining validity and reliability and sharing the limitations and delimitations of this particular study.

Chapter 4: Participant Profiles

In this chapter, I provide a profile of each participant, highlighting their academic institutions and their stories. Providing insight into the participants' lives to better understand their situational context is an important component of narrative research (Clandinin, 2013). It adds to the rich, thick description needed for qualitative frameworks, and allows the reader to better understand the research findings due to knowing more about the participants. Through a group overview and participant vignettes, the participants are introduced using two distinct memories: 1) their first sports memory and 2) when they knew they might receive a college scholarship. While sharing these narratives, I interlace the vignettes with details that illustrate the personality and details of each participant, highlighting their experiences through sports and additional insight into the intricacies and nuance of our interviews. These details help provide the rich, thick description needed in qualitative research. The chapter concludes with a preview of what will be discussed in chapter 5, which focuses on data collection and analysis.

Participants and Setting the Context

Seven participants consented to participate in this narrative inquiry. The seven participants all identify as Black men and participate in a varsity sport that aligns with the sampling criteria. Two of the participants play football and the other five participants are varsity track and field. The football player and three of the track and field athletes attend Elite University, one track and field participant attends the University of the South, and the other track and field participant attends HBCU Pride. All participants are at least in their second year of college, including two sophomores, two redshirt juniors, two juniors, and one senior. Due to the impact of COVID-19, all participants have at least one more year of eligibility to participate in their sport. The participants live in a range of cities across the South and Midwest. One

participant is from Ohio, two are from Texas, one is from North Carolina, one is from Illinois, and two are from Georgia. Each participant described their passion for sports began early in their educational journey and crystallized around their sophomore year of high school. To provide additional insight, I identified a tagline from each participant's narrative that represents a direct quote or a sentiment they described during data collection. This tagline serves as a method to identify the individual student-athletes throughout the narrative and provide context about their athletic, academic, and social experiences. In Table 1, I present relevant participant information to guide the presentation of the profiles and the findings. The participants are organized according to their sport and their role or position in that sport.

Table 1

Participant Demographics and Information

Participant pseudonym	Age	Class year	Major	Varsity sport	Campus	Tagline
Jett Thomas	21	Junior	Psychology	Sprinter	Elite University	*A record setting pace*
Justice Lancaster	22	Senior	Chemistry	Sprinter	Elite University	*All Eyes on me*
Blaze Williams	20	Sophomore	African/ African American Studies	Sprinter & hurdles	Elite University	*Don't sweat the technique*
Boomer Holt	20	Sophomore	Public Health	Triple Jump & long jump	HBCU Pride	*A member of the pack*
Mercedes Lewis	22	Junior	Business	Shotput	University of the South	*Ready for more*
Clyde Reeves	22	Redshirt Junior	Political Science	Football defensive line	Elite University	*Bringing the Energy*
Doc Cunningham	22	Redshirt Junior	Psychology	Football defensive line	Elite University	*Champion Legacy?*

Research Site Description

Each campus had distinct characteristics that attracted the participants. In this section, I present the participant profiles with particular attention to their introduction to athletics the moment they knew they could receive a scholarship to go to college. Elite University is a mid-size R1 private institution in the South. This campus is known for its academic and athletic success. At Elite University, track and field is a growing sport that has recently produced several Olympians. Since getting a new coach, the team has grown into a repeat contender for conference championships. The team continues to hope to recruit two-sport athletes (i.e., football and track) to grow the team events and thrive as a program. The current head coach joined the staff at Elite University in 2008 and became head coach in the last few years. In football, Elite also continues to improve and has produced numerous players in the NFL. Currently, the football team has a record over .500, has won several conference championships, and hopes to compete for national championships again.

The University of the South is a flagship public institution, nestled in a small town surrounded by a major metropolitan center. With a deep commitment to recruiting and educating local students at record-low tuition, this campus is also known for its excellence in athletics, academics, and research. The campus is considered a large R1 with over 30,000 students. The track program is one of pride for the institution, particularly in distance events. The program has yielded multiple Olympians, particularly sprinters. Despite this success, the team has only one conference championship and one national indoor championship. The current head coach joined the University of the South track and field family just before the global health pandemic. Joining at this time has impacted the way the coach built relationships with the athletes, but this is

something the student-athletes and head coach expect to improve by spending more time together and learning more about each other.

HBCU Pride is a college campus located in the South. Known for producing excellent healthcare professionals, this campus is not as well-known as an athletic power, but instead, as an institution that invests in its community by graduating students who stay and work locally. Located in a major metropolitan city, this campus shares resources with nearby R1 institutions to complement both the academic and athletic experiences of their students. The track team is one that continues to find ways to grow. Since the team must compete with other larger local universities for athletes, HBCU Pride often relies on transfers for their new student-athletes. Generally, student-athletes who run track for HBUC Pride want to join a team where community building and success in competition are given equal consideration. The current coach joined HBCU Pride in the middle of the pandemic, and, according to Boomer, is focused on building a positive team culture centered on support, accountability, and excellence.

Meet the Track and Field Participants

Five of the seven participants in this study are track-and field athletes. Three are from Elite University, one is from the University of the South and the other is from HBCU Pride. Their narratives are introduced below to introduce the study participants and provide context for the reader as we hear their stories unfold.

Jett: On a Record-Setting Pace

Jett Thomas grew up in Texas, where high school sports dominated social life and not just during football season. Basketball, baseball, and many other Olympic sports were just as popular, and this was something Jett noticed early in life. Standing 5'10'' and running a 4.34 40-yard dash, Jett was born to sprint and always approaches life from a place a joy. Taking his turn

to run around the quarter-mile track at his high school gives Jett a great sense of pride. Jett applies the same sense of pride to his academic coursework, time with his family, and building community with friends. During our interview, Jett's comprehensive answers were rivaled by his gregarious smile and desire to share more.

Jett's love for sports and telling his story are at the center of his journey to Elite University. As a young kid, Jett was introduced to sports through youth soccer. Beaming during his response, Jett shared, "I remember just feeling so free, having fun, playing a sport that I really enjoy…. I was tiny. I was six or seven years old. Playing on a big soccer field, [I] was just in awe." Like most young kids, Jett's favorite part of the competition was the snacks and arm tunnel after each game:

> I don't know if we won or lost, because all the games I played were mixed up together. But I do remember specifically afterwards, that all of the parents would make one of the arm tunnels and they would have us all run through. We'd just start running through multiple times after the game, even though we were tired.

Jett remembered his mom always taking him to games, his dad always cheering him on, and his drive to win growing with every match. Jett also noticed one thing while playing soccer: he was faster than everyone. His long, lanky legs and bony frame allowed him to fly across the pitch. "I was seen as the token fast kid, but I mean, I was faster than everybody." This love for running would continue through middle and high school, where Jett attended an all-boys school in Texas and joined the track team. Hot Texas summers provided Jett the opportunity to push himself to his physical limits. Being young and training often meant that Jett missed out on some of the perks that come with being young in high school. However, this dedication to his teammates and his craft proved to be beneficial. Jett followed in his brothers' footsteps and

became a varsity runner as a high school freshman. Being the youngest member of a relay team, he noticed early on his team had a chance to be great.

Jett loved discussing his role on a winning team and the community he was able to build through track. His pride in running emerged early in our conversation. He shared how setting records quickly became his focus:

Going throughout that season, we kept running close to that school record, close to that school record time. We did, we eventually got it… I was a sophomore, so I was one of the youngest there. I was small. Everybody was taller than me. But all that to say, just going to the state meet, running the time we ran, I knew I had the potential and knew I had it within me to go to college.

Participating in the United Interscholastic League (UIL) 6A (the largest and most competitive high school league in Texas), impacted the way Jett approached his athletic, academic, and social opportunities. His family also fostered healthy? competition. As one of three boys, Jett had to work hard to find his place in his family—a family that loved sports, church, and spending time together. For Jett his family is his biggest source of support because,

…they're the ones who are buying me all this gear, supporting me, coming to every track meet, waking up at the crack of dawn to get me there on time. [They] would stay there all day or over multiple days, buying hotel rooms and all that stuff. Supporting me! Giving me a hug if I had a bad race or cheering for me. Taking me out to dinner if I had a really good race! Overall, being excited to watch me do something that I love.

The chance for greatness crystalized during Jett's sophomore year when, at a state meet, his team set both a school and meet record. Running this race proved to be a catalyst for Jett. After this victory, college recruiters began to call. As Jett shared from his photo response, due to

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his success in high school Elite University was one of the first to reach out, inviting Jett out for a visit. The pristine greens and academic accolades intrigued Jett, but what he loved the most were his potential new teammates. Jett appreciated the relationships he was able to build with his teammates during the visit, in part because those same people became a part of his track family and community. As Jett described,

> …the relationships with my actual teammates [are most important] because they're the people that I'm actually running with or running next to on the line. They're the people! We practice together, and we're the people pushing each other to be our best [and] to break out of ourselves in our sport—to go balls to the wall, have fun, and do it together in a community that's safe! Do it with each other, for me, [and] for each other.

With this mindset, Jett knew when he received the offer to run track at Elite University, that it was not an opportunity he could miss.

"All Eyes on Me"- Meeting Justice

For Justice, growing up south of Atlanta meant he got the best and worst of both rural and city life. A chubby kid who loved competition, Justice remembers the first time he played basketball as a youth. Like most of the other kids playing with him, the most important item for the team was the post-game Capri Sun with the straw poking through the bottom of the pouch instead of the top where it was intended.

Now standing 6'1'' Justice takes a much more pensive approach to his interactions. A constant thinker and processer, Justice often provided short, direct responses in his interview. In fact, when we first talked, he was in his chemistry lab. Dressed in a black hoodie and t-shirt, it took several questions before he let his smile crack on the camera. Once it did, I felt the young man who loved youth basketball emerge and ease into the conversation. This love for basketball

began when Justice was young. What he loved most was his ability to score and receive attention for his athletic success:

> My first athletic memory? [pause] It goes way back to seven or eight years old. I was playing basketball at the time. That's the first sport I competed in. It was like a nearby rec center. I remember I was a chubby kid. I had a little pot belly. But I could shoot the ball. I couldn't do nothing else, but I could shoot the ball.

The chance to play in the rec league set the foundation for his athletic interests. Those interests peaked in middle school when a local track coach saw Justice running with his friends. He could see the natural talent and offered to train Justice if he had any interest in track. Taking the advice of his new coach and mentor, Justice went out for the track team. Growing into his confidence and never backing down from anything, Justice loved to compete and win. For him, being a sprinter was natural: "I was a freshman in high school. And I remember I went to the freshmen's training. It was all freshmen training. And I remember I was just blowing these guys out." With the encouragement of his family, the support of his mother, and the opportunity from his coach, Justice decided to try track. He is glad he did. Early on in meets he flourished and began to gain the attention on MileSplit, a recruiting website for high school track athletes closely followed by college coaches and recruiters. This newfound opportunity to have his race times publicly posted provided Justice the opportunity to take many college visits as he recalled:

> After that meet, I looked at the training searches. It was like MileSplit is the website for track and field. I remember the Georgia section also, but I remember that during the searches, like oh yeah, athletics turned into, like I said, my name. I was like, wow, that's crazy…. I was always number one. And that comes from me being at a very competitive

high school, as well, especially being in Georgia. That's really what I'm now remembering. From there, it was like all eyes on me.

Justice knew his college home was not just important for him- but also for his mother. She was with him on each visit, including his trip to Elite University. Meeting the coach of the Elite track team, something stood out to Justice, specifically that his coach had a background in divinity. The choice was easy with his bible in his hand and his mother in his ear. Any institution could give you the opportunity to learn from a good coach. However, the combination of good coaching, elite academics, and a coach with a divinity degree was something his mother knew was a blessing. Justice explained:

> I prayed, and one thing that jumped out was my coach has a degree from the School of Divinity. He is definitely the type of person that will push me spirituality, too, and that's always been a goal of mine—to be as close to God as I can. I know that my coach would appreciate that and also teach me. Spirituality plays a big, big part [for me] and with my mom, too. She was like, 'Oh, you're going to Elite University!'

Don't Sweat the Technique- Meeting Blaze

For Blaze, preparation and attention to detail have always been at the center of his athletic journey. Despite being a talented track athlete, he knew he was not always the fastest competitor. It would be his attention to detail and his training that would set him apart from his peers, as he described:

> Especially in 400 hurdles for me, because that's one of my main events. Knowing that there's certain things that I can do technique wise and just preparation wise, mentally, physically, that can just ensure that I'm doing what I can do as best as I can. Even if I

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may not just be the naturally fastest person there. Making sure that I'm doing what I need to do to be as sound as I can throughout the race.

While most college athletes always know they want to compete at a varsity level in college, there are some who do not have the best introduction to athletics. From both his responses in his interview and his responses to his photo, Blaze is one of those people. This idea is further highlighted as Blaze describes his first sports memory:

It was in an open park that was near one of my uncle's houses at the time. When we were there, and then it was like, "Blaze, Come on Blaze." It's like my uncles, everything like that. "Come on! You going to play?" It's so funny because back then, obviously, I was younger and everything, but now everybody, for my family that doesn't know that I run track, they always be like, "Boy, when you going to play basketball?" I be like, "I don't have any interest in basketball." But yeah, we playing and they trying to go. And then I'm trying to shoot as best as I can, do as much as I can, running back and forth. I'm like "This is not it for me. I don't have any interest in this." And then in one of the shots that my uncle took, I was looking somewhere, and then the ball came and basically it hit me in the head. I didn't cry. But after that I was like, "Yeah, I'm done."

Despite this awkward beginning, Blaze found he preferred something where he could naturally succeed. A lanky frame enveloped by his light brown skin; Blaze always realized he had a unique opportunity to go to college. Being from just south of Chicago, there proved to be two routes to his goal of going to college on a full scholarship: the 400m hurdles and his schoolwork. For Blaze it was not just due to his athletic ability, but also due to his academic accomplishments. A skilled orator, researcher, and lover of history-- Blaze excelled in school both on the track and in the classroom. He loved asking questions, doing research, and winning-

both track meets and academic brain bowls. Our conversation was one of the easier to conduct, as Blaze always had a good story for every question, appreciated the intellectual exercise of reflecting on his past, and took a lot of pride in his story having both an athletic and academic chapter.

Blaze started this journey in grade school, where he focused on his academics during the year and focused on track in the summer as he described:

Because like I said, I ran during high school. I started in middle school, actually. And then I ran pretty much every summer starting from middle school, as well. And summer track is really where I first and got the best out of it and the most work out of it. So I would say turning it into something that I did that I can do in college, it was just really doing research and making sure that I was putting myself in something that I knew would be something that I wanted to do, and not just doing it because I've been doing it for so long.

The dedication in two spaces combined with elite coaching led him to consider a campus where he could excel both academically and athletically. Now standing just under 6'0'' with a radiant smile, and a precise haircut as only the best barbers in Chicago could provide, Blaze was ready to showcase his talents both in the books and on the starting blocks:

Definitely I would say academic identity is more prevalent for me, because at the end of the day, student-athlete is something that I live by. Number one is literally I came here to get my education, especially being a walk on, there was no guarantee that I was even going to be on the track team. So one thing for me was just making sure that I'm getting what I need out of Elite University, academically.

When Elite University shared with Blaze he would receive an academic scholarship, he was excited. But to ensure his place, he also met with the track coach to see the potential of continuing to run in college. Once this option was approved, Blaze knew there was only one choice from him.

A Member of the Pack- Meeting Boomer

All Boomer could think about was basketball. Like many others in his hometown in Texas, he desired to participate in the sports where he got the most attention. When Boomer was six, basketball was the sport where he received the most attention. He remembered the lowered goals and the smell of "sanitation," indicating the gym had just been cleaned. A fast-talker but shy kid, Boomer enjoyed being a member of a team. His drive to win, unlike the other participants in the study, was fueled by his willingness to always put the needs of the team before his own. Boomer never wanted to be the go-to person. He always appreciated being someone who filled in the gaps needed for the team. As we continued to talk, you could see the commitment to team overshadow the need for self-proclamation:

> Yeah, because every team I've been on, I've been one of the top guys, just not been that guy. I'm still in this phase where it's taking a while for me to be comfortable with being that one, the one to go-to and not necessarily the two or the three. And I do see myself as the two or three because I usually like to blend in and move with packs, but I usually never stand out alone.

This humble approach came through in his responses, his focus on being "pushed" to be a leader, and him being forced to try tack in the 8th grade. Before this decision, the lanky basketball rec-league legend needed to emerge.

For the rest of his time in Texas as a young athlete, all young Boomer wanted to do was play basketball. But his mom had other ideas; as he recalled:

> So, my mom was like, "Okay, you have to do track." And I was like, "I don't want to do track, I want to do spring AAU basketball," to basically get ready for next year. And she was like, "No, you're doing track that's going to get you better." It was almost non-negotiable. So, we ended up going to the office of my middle-school coach, Coach F. and he was like, "Look, just try out track, what's the worst that can happen? Just do track because that's going to get you ready for basketball," and stuff like that. So, I was like, "Okay, I guess."

It is true that sometimes parents know best. Boomer decided to try track based on his mom's feedback and the advice from a middle school coach. At first, he was a sprinter. As he shared through a raspy sigh, this was not his calling. Unable to get settled in sprinting events, he distinctly remembers seeing someone doing the triple jump:

> So, then they brought me over to triple jump and long jump. And triple jump was an event that piqued my interest because it's an event where not necessarily the most athletic person's going to win, or the fastest person's going to win, or the strongest person's going to win, it's the person that basically uses their technique effectively. That's the person that's going to win. And I got all the way up to districts and I got second... I was mad, I got second. So, I was like, okay, forget spring AAU basketball, I want to continue doing this for the summer so that next year I can win the district championship. And then that eighth grade year I just went on a tear streak, it was every single meet, I was undefeated.

From that moment forward, Boomer found a new athletic home. As he continued to participate in both the long jump and triple jump and win events, he became more excited about the potential to attend college. Then, in one meet he set a state record:

> And it was really, once I broke 40-feet that I knew that I could have a college scholarship in this if I keep going because I'm a little bit too undersized in basketball and I know everyone is in that sport right now. And it's like, well if I'm top five in Texas right now, if I can keep this up, I can get a scholarship in this. So that's when I knew."

The behind-the-scenes contributor was now the star. This was the final confidence boost needed to move Boomer from a member of the pack to a leader in his sport, and eventually, scholarship offers to schools all over Texas before deciding to enroll at HBCU Pride.

"Ready for More"- Meeting Mercedes

Growing up in several places was not a challenge for Mercedes. As an only child in a military household, it meant he received all the attention (and discipline) that came from his parents. Standing at 5'10'' but weighing a sturdy 210, Mercedes loved to train. "I was training and doing my homework and going to practice. That's all I was doing. And my parents, they made me understand that it's okay to be different." After spending his early years on several bases, the hopeful football star who did not lack in confidence finally settled in Oklahoma. His love for the region was coupled with his love for sports, especially Oklahoma football. Mercedes knew he was going to play football. Especially after the way his career started after his first practice as a youth. In his written description, Mercedes goes into further detail about this first sports memory:

> We started the drill on our backs, once the whistle blew, we got up as quick as we could to go hit the other person. I remember hitting the kid and making him cry. I felt no

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physical pain…so I became satisfied and wanted to do it to someone else. But then I turned around, coaches and my dad cheering, you know what I mean? Because I ain't soft or whatever. But yeah, I mean I felt sad in the moment, but then when I saw the reassurance that I did the right thing, I was ready for more.

As I sat in my office talking to Mercedes, one of the highlights was watching him take the time to reflect on this memory. Since this was my first interview, I was unsure how this reflection exercise would resonate with participants. After I asked the question, Mercedes looked into the camera, took almost 10 seconds before responding, and shared he wanted to write it down. Then, 8 minutes later, he was ready to proceed. As he typed, you could almost see both the joy and anguish that came with being physically dominant. This mentality of wanting to support and physically impose his will on his competitors continued throughout his football playing experiences all the way through high school. He developed friendships with his teammates, learned to listen to his coaches, and found a community that he loved:

I was definitely close with a lot of those guys, playing with them for a couple years and didn't want to stop playing football because I love football. That's my favorite sport. I love watching it, I love playing it.

But Mercedes also had another goal- and that was to play a varsity sport in college: "The goal was to go D1, it wasn't to be a football player. I wanted to make sure I was at a D1 program playing varsity sport. So, I switched over to track the more research we did into it." As his classmates got older and continued to develop as football players, Mercedes noted that he was undersized and at times, overmatched. As you can imagine, for someone who is competitive as Mercedes, this was difficult. Frustration filled the zoom screen as he described when reality set

in regarding his football experience. It led to a difficult conversation with his parents, yet one that he is eternally grateful took place:

> I remember when I was in ninth or 10th grade, and it was the summer, and it was two days after I just finished football practice or something like that. It was some workouts and we just sitting down and having one of those heart-to-heart moments where it was like, 'If you say you going to do what you want to do, football's probably not the right path for you.'

Despite not being able to continue to play the sport he loved and be with his teammates, Mercedes decided to utilize what he had learned playing football in another sport: track and field- particularly the shotput. He shared, "…it was less about the athletic ability, and it was more about the technique. You grasp the technique because that's something that people can't, they can't take away from you. They can't compare that to anybody else." With a newfound passion and support from his parents (who were also his coaches) Mercedes spent the next three years dedicated to his new craft. This dedication, great coaching and focus led to calls from many colleges. After several on-campus visits and conversations with college coaches, Mercedes knew that The University of the South was for him:

> So, I think just the experience itself is something that I cherish the most with being here. But if I can't say experience, I'd probably say just relationships I've been able to make and the bonds I've been able to create with my teammates. I love it here.

Meeting Football Participants

Two of the seven participants in this study are football players at Elite University. Like their track and field peers, their dedication to their sport is at the center of their college experience, they have managed coaching changes and they are looking to build a legacy of

excellence. Unlike their track and field peers, they do participate in a revenue generating sport, which can add additional pressure from family, friends, and coaches. To better understand and situate their stories, these two participants are introduced below.

Bringing the Energy- Meeting Clyde

Staying close to home as a football player can be both a gift and a curse. For most, the chance to play in front of family and friends is a blessing. For some, it can be a distraction or a hazard. For Clyde, it is a combination of both. But before receiving a scholarship offer, Clyde would survive an incredible journey of success, failure, and motivation. But it started with his need to bring the energy:

> I feel like I could add a lot of energy to my team, whether it's at practice, I feel like I can up the tempo. If I see something's dead, I'm going to get on my... I'm the type of guy that's going to get on my teammates. But over hype something just so we can lock in. Everybody's dragging on a day, like, man, we got to get it together. You know what I'm mean?...You made a bad play, I'm going to come talk to you on the sideline, try to add good energy to the team.

Clyde is from a tough neighborhood in North Carolina, where decades of structural oppression, lack of resources for education, and criminal activity made his neighborhood one of many that are under resourced. But for Clyde, this did not stop his love for sports. He remembered the great relationships with friends, meeting new teammates, and getting the chance to compete. As Clyde described it, "I just remember finding that competitor's edge in me and finding out that I really just did not like to lose."

A big kid with a bigger heart, Clyde used sports to gain exposure to the world beyond his neighborhood. You could hear the joy in his voice when he described the chance to be on any

team. The chance to play any sport- rec youth basketball, soccer, or "Moss" in the middle of the street, was meaningful for Clyde.

This love for sports and teammates led to Clyde playing football in middle school. "I feel like in middle school...Middle school, I would say was the first time that I started hearing about guys in my neighborhood actually getting those opportunities to go play DI." Despite nagging injuries, Clyde dominated on his local team. Now steadily growing and focusing on taking care of his body, Clyde began to believe a scholarship to college was possible. As a team leader and captain, he knew that football would be in his future, because it had to be. That dream started to become a reality in high school; as he described:

It didn't form itself in front of me until sophomore year of high school when... I don't know, I think I had a two, three sack game. And then next thing you know, I'm starting to get emails from recruiting agencies. They're like, "Oh yeah, we want to put your name out on our platform." And they're like, "Yeah, people recruit you, yada, yada yada."

So, when an older teammate and role model, Terrance Hornsby, received a scholarship from Elite University two years prior, Clyde made this his goal. Seeing someone from your neighborhood find success can be powerful. Seeing them do it while doing something they love was even more enticing. Clyde explained:

I would say there's this one guy, his name is Terrance Hornsby. And I felt he was really impactful in my life. I don't know, I seen him, and he was the type... He was walking the line that I wanted to walk in my life. That's like how I wanted people to look at me, that's how I wanted to work, that's how I wanted to go at life.

Terrance took Clyde under his wing and made sure he stayed focused-- on his books and in sports. When the time came, Clyde was ready. The eager, big and tall, local kid would be

following in the footsteps of his mentor. After receiving his offer as a high school student, he made it a point to visit Elite University to work out, prepare, and bring the energy. Now in front of family, friends and those who admired him, Clyde aimed to represent his neighborhood in every practice and game each week, while learning as much as he could about a world he never knew:

> Me personally, I would say my favorite thing is how different everybody is. Elite University is a sort melting pot of cultures and different people from different places. So, it's cool just having a random conversation sometimes with somebody and really learning where they're from, and just hearing how different it is. …I had a lot of great conversations. So, I feel like it's been enlightening, and it really opened my world.

Champion Legacy?- Meeting Doc

For Doc, football came naturally. His father was a football star in college and Doc always knew that football could be a path he could take. This love for football began with a broad love for sports. From a small town in central Ohio, Doc was no stranger to a community centered around sports, particularly college sports. And like many others where he is from, his first memories are playing youth soccer. Doc was a naturally gifted athlete, so his experience differed from that of his peers:

> I've always been a bigger kid, so I kind of played up a year or two, every year I played rec sports. So, I was always with the older kids playing up, and obviously beating them. I was hanging, and sometimes, I was excelling. And throughout that first season, the kind of director of the program took a notice to me, and took a liking to me, and asked me to try out for the travel squad.

Playing against older kids become a regular pattern for Doc. During our interview, the times he seemed to enjoy describing the most were his memories competing with friends in grade school. Due to his size, Doc was used to getting selected first. A naturally gifted athlete at all sports, Doc also excelled at soccer and baseball. As he shared stories with me, his sultry monotone voice peaked when describing his love for competition and his sports family. This love for athletics continued throughout middle and high school where Doc continued to compete against older kids settling on two loves: baseball and football. He said, "I was a big baseball player, and actually, I had the opportunity to play both here at Elite University, and then COVID kind of hit, so that threw everything off track, and I had to make a decision." He would travel throughout high school for both sports, but soon learned that football was his true calling. On an early September night, in the first game of the season as a first-time starter, Doc recorded the sack to win his teams opening game. That night, he received a call from one of the best and most historical football programs in America. The next day, the local paper had a picture of Doc on the cover with the headline "Champion Legacy?" Doc recalled the memory with great pride and a big smile:

> I started as a true sophomore, and then the first game of the year, we were in a nail-biter, one of the best teams in the state. And it came to that last drive in the final play of the game. I ended up sacking the quarterback. And that was kind of my welcome to football moment. So, I remember like, I made that play, the crowd was going crazy, teammates jumping on me, like mom crying in the stands, dad talking his junk up there. Like, it was just right after...I'm telling you, right after that play, that was the catalyst. It was play, stands, mom, dad, interview. The next day, I get a call from a big time Big 10 school for my first recruiting visit.

In conjunction with his athletic success was a commitment to academics, especially in high school. His mother would not have it any other way:

> My mom, she was like books before ball sometimes, and like, get right in the books. So, I mean, I was a kid who was like, I'm not allowed outside until my homework done. And she really meant that. I'm not going to bed until my homework done. I'm at the kitchen table, falling asleep, trying to finish the work after practice and everything.

So, when it came time for Doc to consider college, he really wanted a place where he could meet new people, explore his academic interests, and excel in sports. After a visit to Elite University, Doc knew it was the place for him. The coaches, teammates, and focus on both sports and academics were key factors in this decision:

> They want to help me, and help me advance in life, whether that's athletically or academically. It's just, the people are second to none, and that's kind of part of the reason I ended up coming to Elite University anyway, because on one of my first visits... I mean, my teammates, and coaches, academic staff, the faculty on campus. Like, I was just so impressed with the relationships that I made in that short time. I just love the people here.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the seven participants in this narrative study are introduced, beginning with a brief overview of the participants and their campuses. The chapter continues with an outline detailing their early life experiences, their pathways to college, and the first memory they have in sports as a common experience along their journey. This chapter also highlights the unique detailed insights into their past, their families and their foundational love for sports and competition. In the following chapter, I will discuss the analytical findings from my research

followed by a chapter of discussion, conclusions, implications and recommendations, and

directions for future research.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter, I briefly detail the data collection and analysis processes conducted. Next, I describe the coding process used to develop the themes for this study. The chapter continues with my presentation of the findings in which I provide content summaries and direct quotes from study participants to highlight themes discovered through the analysis. The chapter concludes with a brief description of what was covered in this chapter and an outline for what will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Research Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes and detail how the relationship between student-athletes and their coaches (head coach, position coach or event coach) play a role in the student-athletes academic and athletic identity development. In order to best explore this phenomenon, I used a narrative framework to highlight the stories of student-athletes and the role of coaches in their development.

Seven student-athletes consented to participate in this narrative inquiry. The seven participants all identify as Black men and participate in a varsity sport, which aligns with the sampling criteria. The original expectation was to only focus on participants who participated in revenue generating sports. Due to the challenges of accessing participants in revenue generating sports, the participant bandwidth was expanded to Black male student-athletes who participate in a varsity sport. Two of the participants play football at Elite University and the other five participants are varsity track and field athletes. Three of the track and field athletes attend Elite University, one attends the University of the South, and one participant attends HBCU Pride. All the participants are at least in their second year of college, including two sophomores, two redshirt juniors, two juniors, and one senior. Due to the impact of COVID 19, the participants

have at least one remaining year of athletic eligibility. The participants are from a range of cities across the South and Midwest. One participant is from Ohio, two are from Texas, one is from North Carolina, one is from Illinois, and two are from Georgia.

The model used for this study combines components of Astin's I-E-O model and components of the Jowett's 3C model to highlight the development of the coach-athlete relationship and a student-athletes' academic and athletic identity development. The framework for this particular study is presented in Figure 4. Throughout the data collection process, the major aspects of the model including racial identity, athletic identity, academic experiences, the role of family, and the campus racial climate emerged in the data. Furthermore, the participants discussed at significant length the relationship with their coaches and how closeness, commitment, and co-orientation impacted this relationship.

Figure 4

Model for research study
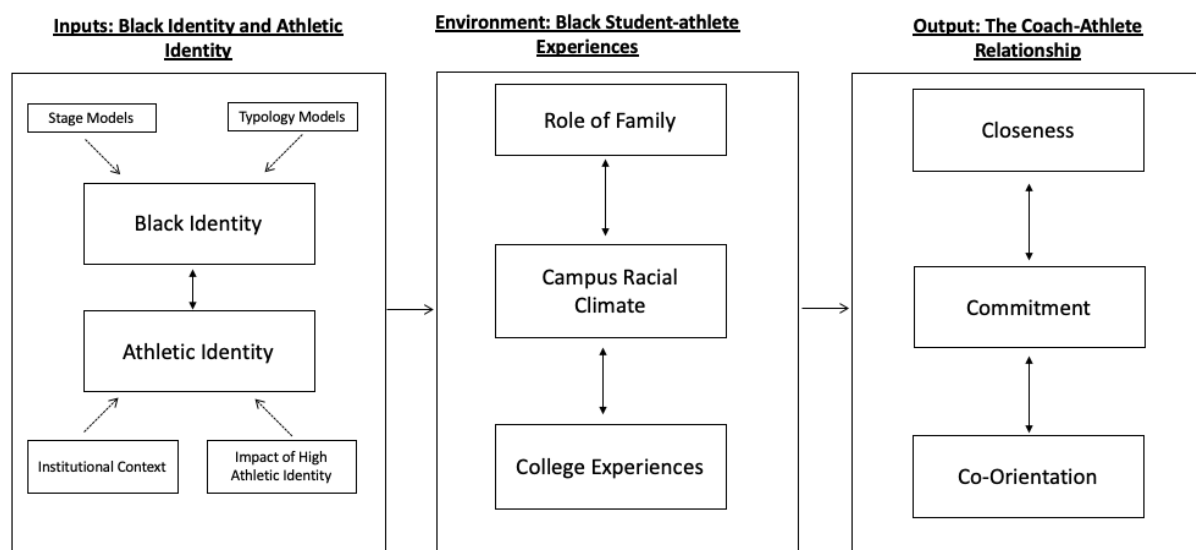
The research questions providing the focus for data collection and analysis are:

1. What are the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who play a Division I sport?

2. How do race and gender intersect and shape athletic, social, and academic identity formation for Black male student-athletes in Division I sports?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between Black male athletes and their coach, particularly in navigating academic, social, and athletic identities and domains in Division I sports?

Findings

Coding the collected data included reviewing interview transcripts, observation notes, memos, and feedback from participant photo elicitation. This process began by a general open coding that yielded an initial set of over 90 codes that were then reviewed for patterns. The patterns were then organized into six specific groups and nearly 40 sub-groups. These subgroups were then color-coded and placed in Microsoft Excel, where they were reorganized into high-level themes that emerged from the patterns. At the conclusion of this process, I identified four themes from the interviews, observations, follow-up communication, and analytic memo data. The four themes include: (a) expectations and exploitation, (b) building bonds beyond bondage: the team as family, (c) rewriting the narrative: thriving despite existing in a culture of anti-Blackness, and (d) finding their voice (see Table 2). In this section, I provide the patterns of understanding for each theme and include participant quotes and observation notes to substantiate each emerging idea regarding (1) the Black male student-athletes' relevant experiences and their identity-related sports and athletic experiences and (2) the role of the coach

in the development of the academic and athletic identity development of Black male student-athletes.

The themes that emerged from the data collection process shed light into an important narrative detailed by student-athletes and link directly to the research questions for this study. The first question sought to understand the lived experience of Black male student-athletes. The findings, particularly the information on the participants college interactions with faculty and peers while managing an environment that fostered anti-Black sentiments emerged through the data. The next question looked to examine the intersection of gender and race on college campuses for Black male student-athletes. Once again, the notions related to a hostile college environment and finding your voice provided a broad perspective on the Black male student-athlete experience. The final research question examined the role of the coach-athlete relationship in these experiences. The findings related to expectations and exploitation, athletics as a family, and student-athletes finding their voice all provide direct linkages to this question.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes/Groups

Theme	Subtheme/Grouping
Expectations and Exploitation	● Expectations from early success ● Exploitation from dedicated effort ● Balancing expectations and exploitation: the role of the coach
Building Bonds beyond bondage: The team as a family	● Bonds with teammates ● Coaches at the center of the family ● External bonds: family and mentors
Rewriting the narrative: Thriving despite existing in a culture of anti-Blackness	● Negative impacts from anti-Black interactions ● Dehumanizing consequences of anti-Blackness in college sports ● Pride in telling a different story
Finding their voice	● Finding their leadership voice ● Finding their academic voice ● Finding their racial voice ● Finding their voice with their coach ● Finding their social voice

Theme 1: Expectations and Exploitation

Each of the participants described the expectations placed on them regarding their athletic potential when sharing their stories. What was more subtle in their stories was the exploitation they experienced as Black male student-athletes. This theme includes how the expectations that came with early success, the exploitation that ensued from their dedicated effort, and the role of coaches in balancing both the expectations and exploitation of Black male student-athletes. Along their athletic and academic journeys, the participants shared experiences about: (a) expectations (b) exploitation as a result from dedicated effort; and (c) the role of the coach in managing both participant expectations and the potential exploitation from participating in varsity sports (see Table 3).

Table 3

Theme 1: Expectations and Exploitation Topic Patterns

Subthemes	Topic patterns
Expectations from early success	● Success attained over a lifetime
Exploitation from dedicated effort	● Sports as their "craft" ● Role of athletic identity
Balancing expectations and exploitation: The Role of the coach	● Coaches' role in academic success ● Critical feedback ● Coaches' role outside competition ● Wisdom from coaches

Expectations from Early Success

For study participants, early success in their sport contributed to their expectation that becoming a varsity student-athlete in college was attainable. Each participant described being on structured sports teams as early as the 8th grade. Team success they experienced early in their athletic careers fostered a confidence in their athletic abilities that helped them believe athletic success could lead to a lifetime of achievement.

While the participants detailed the potential to compete at a varsity level was not realized until high school or college, they noted how the early experiences contributed to their future success and their drive to compete. Doc, a young soccer star in Ohio shared this sentiment:

Like, if I never would have participated in that rec league, would I really have developed my competitive edge? Would I have developed this passion for sports and passion for hard work? I'm like a six-year-old, seven-year-old, eight-year-old with 10- and 11-year-olds, running miles around the freaking fields and competing. But I'm having fun. It's just that's kind of how I started, so I'll never forget that.

When describing his early expectations, Blaze, the Elite University sprinter from Texas, highlighted all sports are highly competitive and that athletes, "want to compete and want to win." Boomer, the long jump and triple jump expert, realized his expectations began to increase in eighth grade when he came in second in a triple jump meet and decided he was going to make it his calling. After working throughout the next year, he came back and won every competition:

> I got all the way up to districts and I got second... I was mad. I was like, okay, forget spring AAU basketball, I want to continue doing this for the summer so that next year I can win the district championship. [In] that eighth grade year, I just went on a tear streak. I was undefeated except for when I went to summer track and actually went up an age. I was going against freshmen and sophomores, and I was in eighth grade at the time!

For these participants, expectations for early success fueled their focus and love for athletics. It is this focus that is a key marker in the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes.

Exploitation from Dedicated Effort

Coupled with the expectations from early success are the ways participants were exploited through their continuous dedication (to both academic and athletic competition), despite having positive results. Specifically, the participants discuss the exploitive methods used to achieve positive results including battling through injuries and the opportunities and challenges that compliment being overly dedicated to sport. Through the quotes and stories shared, the participants made it clear that being dedicated led to a culture of exploitation they needed to understand and navigate during their sports journeys.

For study participants, there was a positive aspect to being dedicated to their sport and their sport becoming their life's work. Clyde, the local hero who brought the energy called it "perfecting your craft." This dedication to craft meant, spending hours practicing techniques to

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be successful and seeing the hours of practice yield results. Clyde described how extended

dedication to practice and honing one's craft was experienced as a student-athlete:

> [For] a lot of athletes, it takes so much time to invest [in] yourself [and] your craft. Your
>
> sport is your craft. How technical we get is incredible. My coach is talking about you
>
> have to pronate your hand, you have to get to the back of the elbow. You know what I'm
>
> saying? It's like that little bone maybe, you touch that and you're good. It's like "Wow!
>
> We're getting that much detail."

However, one of the outcomes of this repeated dedication was the physical exploitation

experienced by participants, including Clyde, who battled major injuries during his time at Elite

University. He often found it difficult to get into a training rhythm and "find [his] groove" as a

student-athlete. When Clyde was healthy, his dedication and honing of his craft included agility

drills and weightlifting, which then yielded personal records in these areas. This success did

come at a cost, as Clyde faces the potential to medically retire early, in large part due to his want

to train and continue to compete at a high level.

The participants also shared the important role that athletic identity played in their early

athletic success, leading to potential exploitation as student-athletes. Blaze, the dual star in

academics and athletics, highlights how his athletic identity plays a role in his dedication and

effort. "I think athletic identity is something that teaches you how to push yourself, even when

you're really tired, even when you think you don't have anything left." This ability to push

himself led Blaze to earn a scholarship, but not at the expense of his academic success. Justice

(the confident sprinter who is also the sole Black chemistry major on his campus) discussed how

his dedication to his body and his coaches' constant feedback helped yield positive results and

fueled his continued training. In early Fall semester meetings, Justice provided his pre-season

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goals for training and noted the way his coach urged him to do more and not "just putting anything down, but [think about it]. Are you actually doing these things?" Justice shared how feedback from his coach is something he took to the classroom, looking to not just "write down academic goals, but actually work to bring them to life." An approach focused on being detailed about his next steps was particularly important for Justice since his academic experience would be a lonely one as the only Black male chemistry major at Elite University and the most accomplished sprinter on his current team.

Despite the student-athletes identifying positive aspects of their dedicated effort, they also expressed the challenges and feeling of being exploited as college student-athletes. Clyde remembered the advice from an older athlete mentor that helped him see the downside of being solely focused on athletics from an early age who shared when production stops, coaches move on, and a lack of empathy from those who only see student-athletes for their on-the-field contributions and often forget their humanity. This advice centered on the importance of producing results, having success to increase university profits and not being prioritized as a student-athlete but as an asset for university control. The sentiment continued, as Clyde was told no one cares about what is going on outside of sports- they only care about results:

> That's the reality of the sport—the nature of the sport. If you're not producing, you're not that guy. So, when we go out there and perform on Saturday nights, nobody cares what you're going through at home. Nobody cares if your foot hurts. Nobody cares if you just torn your knee, and you buy out for the season. I need to go get this touchdown. That's just the nature of the situation, and that's what Terrance told me. He was like, "Nobody cares."

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Doc, the all-star athlete with a lineage of athletic success, specified how being overly committed to your sport can lead to student-athletes being exploited and having to manage role engulfment. Doc reflected on how the time it takes to be dedicated to your craft can lead student-athletes to focusing only on developing their athletic selves. As Doc confirmed, "I feel like the problem is a lot of times they're synonymous, because a lot of people at Elite University get stuck in their football identity, or baseball, or basketball, whatever it is, because that's all they know." According to these participants, while being dedicated to their craft can lead to positive outcomes, being singularly focused can increase the feelings of exploitation due to one's athletic identity and negatively impact student-athletes academic and social identities.

The study participants believed being dedicated and giving maximum effort will lead to positive results. In the same instance, they also acknowledged how this dedication created an environment of exploitation within their athletic pursuits. Through their dedication to their craft and seeing their effort pay off, the participants detailed how their involvement in sports evolved. For some, this craft led to the acknowledgement of role engulfment and feeling exploited as something they needed to consider as they hoped to achieve both academic and athletic success.

Balancing Expectations and Exploitation: The Role of the Coach

The final subtheme of the path to success theme includes the role the coaches played in balancing the expectations and exploitation for these Black male student-athletes. Through paying keen attention to participant academic success, finding spaces to provide critical feedback, being a support outside of competition and providing wisdom to their student-athletes, coaches in this particular study played a pivotal role in balancing the expectation and exploitation of study participants.

Due to their overall management of the team, the participants emphasized the coaches'

influence on their academic and athletic pursuits. The ability to focus on academic as well as

athletic success is a key component to balancing an environment of expectations and

exploitation. Academically, Doc detailed how his academic advisor at Elite University

corresponded directly with position coaches and the head coach about his academic performance:

> The funniest thing I think they [coaches] do [is check on our academic progress]. Our
>
> coordinators will put [teammates who have missed academic coursework] in a group chat
>
> with our coaches. So, they'll be like the coordinator, your position coach, and Coach
>
> Elite. And like, "So-and-so has missed this many classes, or didn't turn in this
>
> assignment, and he's been messing around," and it's like that.

Justice, the sprinter from just outside Atlanta, also shared the ways in which his coach supported

his academic goals. For Justice, this meant his coach constantly checking in on him to make sure

he was meeting the "personal and athletic milestones" Justice outlined for himself. Jett, a

teammate of Justice from Texas, also highlighted this, sharing how his coach suggested he take

time away from the team to be sure he could meet his academic dreams: "So he told me to take a

few days and see how felt when I came back. It was the right idea. I was able to get my courses

in order and I missed my teammates. I was back more focused." These examples highlight how

having coaches who understand academic excellence plays an important role in balancing an

environment of expectation and exploitation for Black male college student-athletes.

Based on participants' experiences, critical feedback was another important component

of increasing expectations while limiting exploitation. Two examples of participants receiving

critical feedback leading to success were provided by Clyde and Boomer. Clyde was a local

phenom, but when he described his relationship with his coaches, it initially began on rough

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terrain. Clyde spoke of the impacts from not taking feedback from his coach personally and "focusing on what you can control" as the catalyst for this feeling beginning to shift. This shift in perspective allowed Clyde to see significant improvement in his playing time and role on the team. Previously, Clyde had been taking the feedback personally. Once he realized it was not a personal attack, but rather a way to see him improve as an athlete, it made a significant difference: "I feel like when I took the coaching a different way… [I] just took it as he's trying to help me. It helped me take off. I broke all my records in terms of speed and strength." Boomer from HBCU Pride identified how his coach never let him feel he was doing enough and always had feedback on his performance. In the interactions Boomer had with his coach, he remembers the important role his technique played in the critical feedback he constantly received:

> [Coach] has always shown me that [no matter how] many hours you train, something's always going to be wrong, and you just got to be okay with it. But that also drives you to basically be a perfectionist and to be the best that you can and be the sharpest that you can. Even if some people say like, "Oh it's right, don't worry about it." She [Coach] is always going to find something wrong.

This notion of always having something improve is an important hallmark of critical feedback and is a shared experience by participants.

Participants also described the role coaches play outside of competition in balancing expectation and exploitation. Boomer detailed as he was coming back from injury that his coach "really cared" and he "would run through a brick wall" for his coach. Boomer gave specific details on how his coach paid particular attention to his needs outside of track while undergoing treatment, making him feel valued and not exploited:

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While I was injured, he provided a detailed practice regimen and made sure I always had

the proper nutrition and sleep routine to speed up my recovery. He's probably done more

than any college coach has done for me in the span of two to three months, [more] than

anybody's done within these past two years.

Justice, who hailed from Georgia and needed constant support to remained focused on his

athletic and academic capabilities, described a similar scenario when discussing his high school

coach and the role he played in his athletic success outside of competition. Justice shared his

coach "pushed him as a man," which was important for Justice due to his familial financial

limitations:

But Coach Emerald, he really took care of me. He really coaches me as an athlete, pushes

me as a man. He took care of me in times with like, "Oh yeah, if you need to go to the

chiropractor, don't worry about it." I've got you, type thing." That [support] comes from

me knowing the financial situation at home was not always the best. Him being able to

take me on and train me, and make sure I'm getting my good practice, my good recovery,

and being able to go to different meets like in New York, or Louisiana, or Tennessee

without having to have my mom bent over backwards to do that for me. It was always

amazing for me.

This support provided by coaches outside of athletic competition with a particular focus on

training, health, healing, and financial support was another key component that emerged in the

data when examining the balance of expectations and exploitation for study participants.

The final component of the role of the coach in balancing a culture of expectations and

exploitation of Black male student-athletes centered on the participants illustrating the general

wisdom their coaches provided during training. Jett, the sprinter from Texas and psychology

major, shared the following when discussing the wisdom he received from his coach: "He's a person that gives really good advice when it comes to mental health, sports anxiety, overcoming injuries, all that stuff. His attention to me in this way showed that wow, you are listening to me, you do care." Justice always exuded confidence and often felt it was his own work ethic that helped achieve a full scholarship for track. However, even he avowed his coach played an important role in his early skill development leading to feeling supported and not exploited: "My coach plays, like right now, if I say the top two things in my athletic progression…one would be me, of course... and then two, is him." Both Justice and Jett attribute their coach for their development due to their general knowledge and wisdom within their sport.

The first theme in data analysis centered on the importance of expectations and exploitation for these Black male student-athletes and their storied experiences. The theme included several key factors participants believed were important components to managing their expectations and not feeling exploited while participating in varsity sports. As participants shared their narratives, they spoke of their expectations from early success, the positive and negative outcomes from feeling exploited, and the role of the coach in managing an environment with both high expectations and the potential for exploitation. The narratives presented above are an important component of the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes and gives additional detail to the involvement of the coach in their athletic success.

Theme 2: Building Bonds Beyond Bondage: The Team as a Family

Under this theme, the participants detailed how being on a team influenced their athletic, academic, and social identities, which enabled them to experience a sense of family through sports. Often, varsity athletics has been described as "the new plantation", and student-athletes, especially Black men, can feel they are in bondage due to their academic, athletic, and social

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environment. In this particular study, participants often described their team as a "sanctuary" and a place of safety. This ability to build bonds was comprised of several sub-themes, including bonds with their teammates, coaches at the center of the family, and the external bonds of immediate family and mentors (see Table 4).

Table 4

Theme 2: Athletics as Family

Subthemes	Topic patterns/Nuances of meaning
Bonds with teammates	● Lifelong bonds ● Support in high and low moments
Coach at the center	● Coaches challenge and support ● Coaches leading in building team community
External bonds: Family and mentors	● Family focus on academics ● Family encouragement in sports ● Support from additional mentors

Bonds with Teammates

The participants teammates were so important in contributing to their athletic experiences and identities that they were described as their athletic family. Two topics emerged in the subtheme of bonds with teammates: (a) creating lifelong bonds and (b) being a source of support in high and low moments. In the data that follow, these student-athletes convey the importance of their teammates in the past, the present, and in the future.

Many of the participants shared after deciding on their institution, their first memories were of the strong bonds they built with their teammates. The connection with teammates came to life in these stories. Doc, whose father also played professional football, highlighted how teammates serve as a continual force in one's life just like family: "Coaches can be fired. Your

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teammates will be with you for life." Jett, an avid talker and track star at Elite University, added

to this idea of teammates being a continual force in one's life because of the relationships formed

and because they, "practice together and pushing each other to be our best to break out of

ourselves in our sport." Mercedes, a shotput king attending the University of the South, also

described his relationship with teammates, which was captured during his interview and response

to photos shared during data collection process, sharing the bonds they have been able to develop

and how these bonds have been a seminal part of his experience:

> [I treasure the] relationships I've been able to make and the bonds I've been able to create
>
> with my teammates through training and then off the field and outside the weight room.
>
> [With] some of these guys that I'm living with, and I've built really great relationships
>
> with … our bonds will last a lifetime.

The importance of their teammates and the relationships they built and fostered served as a

crucial component of these student-athletes' experiences and meaning making as Black male

college student-athletes, which led to feelings of being with family.

Contributing to teammates becoming family, the study participants illustrated how their

connection with their teammates came about because these are the people the participants

experience both their greatest success and most difficult moments. Part of developing a bond

with teammates is how these athletes surrounded themselves with individuals who provided

support for them in both high and low moments. For Doc, this support was constant: "I mean,

those are my boys for life, so like, we came through it together. We went through everything

together." Blaze, who's infamous basketball beginning led him to track, also surrounded himself

with good people to make it through the difficult workouts or periods in life when "there is a lot

on you, and you wonder 'why are you doing this?' [Then you remember] that your teammates

are here to support you." Doc crystalized this point of teammates as a constant force and how his

relationships with his teammates will stay with him into the future:

> Like, those are some of my greatest friends, and we came in together, 2019, in the
>
> summer, and now we're in our senior year. We talked about how we were going to
>
> change the culture. Those were tough times. Now, we all graduate in the spring, and it is
>
> crazy how fast time flew, and the relationships that we have now. A lot of them will be in
>
> my wedding.

Overall, the bonds with their teammates served as a source of constant support and fostered their

sense of family, a family away from home.

During competition, I could see the participants relying on their bonds to help them

persist through challenges in their sports. I noticed Doc and Clyde, one a captain and the other a

role player on the defensive line, found ways to encourage each other and their teammates during

the critical moments of their game in the fourth quarter. Doc roamed the sideline shouting, "One

more play, give me one more play!" as he encouraged his defensive teammates to make a critical

stop at the end of the game. Clyde also took on the role of energizer, which corroborated what he

shared in his interview. He never let a teammate have their head down. He was ecstatic when the

team pulled out a victory running onto the field to greet his peers at the conclusion of the game.

These observations further demonstrate the importance of the bond the participants described in

helping each other manage the difficulties of performing and being present during the highs and

lows of competition.

Coach at the Center

If teammates are members of the family, participants noted that the coaches, serve as the

center of the family. This means, like any family leader, there are moments where participants

love the center of the family and times when they are challenged by the relationship. The participants shared, both in their interviews and from photo responses, they believed coaches serve as the center of the family by challenging and supporting their athletes, spearheading team community building and taking on the responsibility as the positional and figurative leader of their athletic families.

Participants detailed the ways in which their coaches both challenged and supported them while they navigated their relationships. For Justice, the track start who also loved the chem lab, his coach often challenged him with advice about whom he chose to include in his community and how that could impact his long-term dreams. The constant reminders of, "Outside of track, outside of school, are you taking care of yourself?" and, "Justice, realign yourself" were important reminders for Justice from his coach. Boomer, the HBCU Pride long jump champion, detailed support from his coaches as he looked to mitigate his transition to college. He identified the ways his coach allowed him to grow into his own identity, be himself during college, and find out the ways his new campus could feel like home: "I have a little bit more freedom to express myself with my coach and [make] suggestions. And I also get to be more of a student, which is important for me." The ability to both challenge athletes and support their development is a role participants noted they believe coaches play as the center of the family while building team unity. Jett sprinted his way into the discussion, describing how coaches are the "boss" of the team and what that means for their role in helping teammates build relationships, team culture, and get members of the "family" to respect one another. Jett framed this as a complicated web that must be constantly examined sharing that in some families, "You don't have to like each other, but it's about respect and forming relationships based on respect." This

notion adds additional clarity from study participants into how coaches must challenge and support their student-athletes as they seek to build a family-like culture on their teams.

Study participants also shared the role coaches play in making the team feel like a community where trust, advice, and teamwork are essential components to team success. When there was open communication between coaches and their teams, they felt their community strengthen. Boomer from HBCU Pride experienced this in continuous sessions with one of his coaches during a difficult period where competing priorities were impacting his training. Boomer noted that training sessions with his Coach Beethoven taught him, "we have to be in constant communication about what we need from each other." For Blaze and Justice from Elite University, at the conclusion of difficult races, their coach was there to be supportive. In the moment, neither participant wanted to receive critical feedback or "coaching advice" on how to improve for the next race. They simply wanted an encourager, a role their coach was able to assume. When coaches are creating a space for student-athletes to have a family-like environment by paying attention to the needs of the members of the team community, the student-athletes noticed. Jett discussed how his coach does a great job creating an environment where individuals can feel respected and heard, why this is important when building a team, and the synergy that can come from it:

> In that aspect, that team building, and that forming relationships in new scenarios, and being able to work together as a team, that impact has a greater run in not only academics, but in family situation-ships, in life beyond athletics, life beyond academics, because that's how you actually stay close to people, and understand people for who they are, and understanding their beliefs, and all of that on a non-academic, non-athletic level.

This ability to know the needs of the team enhances the community foundation and adds validity to the challenge and support approach of most coaches. This attempt to be at the center of community building by coaches was consistently acknowledged by the participants, which was an important aspect of their storied experiences.

External Bonds: Family and Mentors

Another key component in the development of Black male student-athletes that emerged from data collection was the role of parents, mentors, and advisors in building a family environment. For several participants, this began with their families focusing on their academic responsibilities before their athletic commitments. Boomer from HBCU Pride framed his focus on academics as a skill he derived from his mother- not his coach or his advisors. "My academic identity really doesn't stem from my coach…it stems from my mom." Despite not liking school, Mercedes from the University of the South was also required by his parents to do his coursework before he could train. His parents were his coaches in high school, so he had no choice but to first complete his academic tasks before being allowed to train. "The truth is I don't like school. But I knew I needed to do school so I could train. That is discipline I learned from my parents." The focus on academics from families was a welcomed perspective that is captured in the perspectives of some study participants. Doc supported this idea, as he also detailed how his mother would not let him participate in sports unless he had completed his schoolwork:

> Because like my mom, she was like books before balls sometimes, and like, get right in the books. So, I mean, I was a kid who was not allowed outside until my homework [was] done. And she really meant that. I'm not going to bed until my homework is done.

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The families focus on academics is a keen development for these participants, and an important component of the narrative surrounding the experience of Black male student-athletes and their experiences in college.

Families also played important roles outside of academics including being an encouragement to student-athletes, taking them to their events, and making sure they felt supported during competition. Mercedes was in awe as he recalled how his family ensured he stayed focus and provided the necessary resources so he could achieve his dream of being a DI scholarship athlete. He shared how his family held him accountable, provided private coaching, and allowed him to travel to different meets outside his Georgia home. According to Mercedes, the ability to have access to private coaching was "very important in high school or part of my success." This overall role of the family cementing the bonds of the athletics family is further cemented by the quote from Jett Elite University psychology major and former Texas sprinting star, who noted what it means when his immediate family watched him race:

> Just overall, being excited to watch me do something that I love. Watch me in my fullest potential, no distractions, just really zoned in, locked in. They knew that when I run, I run for my team, and run for the people that I'm running with, run for my coaches, and all that, and then ultimately, run for them.

The encouragement from their families, from an early age throughout the participants' college experience was another key meaningful experience that emerged in the data.

The role of mentors was also an important component of the external bonds built by study participants. For Jett, the role of additional members of the community beyond his coaches and familial unit impacted the athletics community being a family. His middle and high school principals helped him maintain his academic and athletic eligibility. Jett describes the kind and

welcoming environment they created as the reason he decided to become an educator. "They always supported me, even when things happened to me that were not fair." Jett shared his principal made him feel heard, understood, and validated. "She was always there for me. She always had my back. She trusted me. That meant a lot." Having someone to count on outside of one's family and resonated for Jett and this support is an important part of the familial environment study participants detailed was created through participation in varsity athletics.

The bond developed by teammates, the role of the coach at the center of those bonds, and other external bond supporters were important components to developing the team as a family for these student-athletes. The participants felt the bond with their teammates, their coaches as the center of that bond and the external bonds developed by family members and mentors were an important part of their narratives. This importance of a familial environment in team sports, the role of coaches in developing these family-like environments, and the expanding of conceptions regarding who is a member of one's athletic family are all important components raised in the data and further highlight the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes.

Theme 3: Rewriting the Narrative: Thriving Despite Existing in a Culture of Anti-Blackness

The importance of painting a different picture despite existing in environments where participants were expected to thrive while managing incomplete, inaccurate, and/or omitted information about their experience as Black male student-athletes was daunting. Dealing with these environments was a critical component of their storied experiences. A culture of anti-Blackness was most prevalent in academic and social spaces and were described by the participants as being perpetuated by their peers, university faculty, and their academic coordinators. In the following sections, the participants discuss the impact this anti-Black

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environment had on participant experiences and how they must exist in this space as they navigate life on and off campus. For some participants, the environment started as early as middle school and continued throughout college. The sub-themes emerging in this section include the negative impact from anti-Black interactions and the pride in telling a different story (see Table 5).

Table 5

Theme 3: Rewriting the Narrative: Thriving Despite Existing in a Culture of Anti-Blackness

Subthemes	Topic patterns/Nuances of meaning
Negative impact from anti-Black interactions	● Targeted in the classroom ● Challenge of being one of a few
Dehumanizing consequences of anti-Blackness in college sports	● Toxic masculinity ● Stereotype threat
Pride in telling a different story	● Academic overachievement ● Proving people wrong

Negative Impact from Anti-Black Interactions

The participants in this study highlighted in both their interviews and photo response notes the anti-Black environment they experienced and described the impact these negative interactions had on their classroom connections. These negative academic stereotypes led to experiences where participants were targeted in class and forced to manage being "one of a few." Furthermore, these negative anti-Black interactions manifested in participants acknowledging the potential harm that could come from stereotype threat and toxic masculinity. Each of these ideas is explored in the subsequent participant findings.

Surviving in an anti-Black academic environment proved difficult even for an academic all-star like Doc. Despite receiving all-conference academic honor roll while majoring in

psychology, Doc had a negative interaction with a faculty member that continues to impact his college classroom experience. This response was captured during his interview and further described in Doc's photo response. During a break in class, Doc took out some other work to stay ahead in his other classes. The faculty member saw this and stated, "What's that shit on your desk? Put that shit away." After his initial shock, Doc thought,

> [My] reaction was, "You got me F'd up." [So, I] asked him again. I said, "What'd you say?" And I said this kind of stern, and I think it kind of scared him, because then it turned into a "Put that stuff on your desk away."

This interaction led to a back and forth where Doc tried to explain he was going to listen to the faculty member, but he did not like being disrespected. During our interview, as Doc recalled the interaction he detailed saying to the professor, "I didn't mean to disrespect you by me doing my homework, but you don't need to talk to me that way." Even after class, Doc talked with his academic advisor, his coach and his teammates about the interaction "So I'm asking everybody. I'm asking all these like officials. I'm asking different people, including Deans and advisors, and other professors. Because like, 'How should I handle this?' Because everything in me wants to cuss him out." To try and move past this situation, Doc sent a letter apologizing to the faculty member for raising his voice in class, but reiterating he did not like being disrespected. Doc described why he felt he needed to apologize sharing, "[If I do not apologize] Then what do I lose? I lose my character. It was just a whole thing." The response from the faculty member is what still bothers Doc:

> I don't want to meet with you. You disrespected me in class in front of the other students, this, that, and third, and all this crazy stuff, and then one of the emails he sent me... And mind you, he spelled my name wrong like three times. So, in the last email he sent me,

the name was spelled wrong, of course, and I said something, and he was like, He said,

"You deserve to be disrespected."

This sentiment captured by this faculty member and the interaction with Doc was something that emerged in other stories shared by participants. Clyde, who is Doc's teammate and good friend at Elite University, stated:

I feel like there's been many times where you come into the room and the professor's like, "all right now, I know how you guys get down, so I need you to lock in." And it's like it is kind of unnecessary. I don't know, it just feels like you're kind of targeted being Black in a classroom.

For Doc and Clyde who are both football players, these interactions prompted a range of emotions including frustration, anger, bewilderment, and disrespect were captured in their tone and their text. These encounters are two examples of the negative impacts of being targeted in class by university faculty.

Another impact the participants articulated was often being "one of a few" in their academic pursuits. Justice, a lone Black chemistry major, shared the impact of race and athletics while pursuing his coursework. Being a student at Elite University brought a magnitude of academic expectations that for Justice were challenging. He described being in a 100-person class as one of three Black students and the pressure that comes with meeting the academic expectations he set for himself and what his peers might think. Justice shared, "You can feel like, oh yeah, I want to lay back, I want to sit in the back row. Or I don't want to answer questions, I'm nervous. Does the teacher actually see me? You know what I mean?" Doc further highlighted this point in relation to how peers perceive their athlete classmates and the impact it has on how they connect in class:

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"You're on the football team here. You don't deserve to be here, and I don't think you're

as smart as I am." That's not just people outwardly saying it, but I mean, it's attributed in

your group projects. Some professors are really that way. Like, they just hate athletes,

and that's across the board, because they feel like we're, I guess entitled, or whatever the

answer might be, but they absolutely despise athletes, so you have to deal with that in

classes as well, where they actually work against you.

The sentiments shared by both Jett, an Elite University sprinter and future educator, and Doc, a

potential All-American and academic rock-star, give insight into the challenges of being one of a

few student-athletes when pursuing academic excellence amongst their peers.

Another impact of being expected to survive and thrive in an anti-Black environment is

the expectation that, due to their appearance, their peers knew they are a varsity athlete.

Participants shared due to their size, skin color, and the clothes they wore, they felt stereotyped

by others on campus. It can be difficult in college to develop your social identity. This is further

complicated for Black male student-athletes, who must manage their athletic responsibilities and

racial stereotypes due to the way they look. When others (including university guests) assume,

due to the way they look on campus, their attire, and their athletic gear they participate in a

varsity sport. Justice described sitting in his chemistry lab, looking under his microscope, and

still being asked if he was a student-athlete at Elite University:

Even the other day, I was actually working under my microscope, and someone came in

to drop off a product, a delivery guy. And I'm working under the microscope. And he

looks at me and he says, "Oh yeah, do you play sports here?" I was like, "Yeah, I do" but

like, why is that your first question, you know what I mean? Can you ask like, "Oh yeah,

what are your experiments?"

Doc, the participant who had the difficult exchange with a university faculty member, describes a similar scenario, but from his peers. As Doc affirmed, being one of a few Black students in class impacts the way his peers view him. This combined with his stature means he perceives being solely viewed as an athlete and must manage the stereotypes that come from this perception from his peers:

> But there have been a lot of things that that, being... I mean, as far as, like I said, numbers in class, I'm usually one of three maybe. So, it's just you stick out regardless. It's like there's no hiding, no matter how big, how small. If you are a Black male, or a female, who walks in there in the class, bam, "What sport do you play?" And that's funny, because all my Black colleagues, or classmates who don't play a sport, they're always asked if they play a sport. It's just funny how it works.

This expectation of sports participation due to appearance was so impactful for some, they decided not to wear their athletic gear around campus. Doc described a scenario where athletes "stick out" compared to their peers, so they may try to take steps to blend in and be a traditional student:

> So, a lot of times, I walk into classes, and I stick out like a sore thumb regardless. And I remember, my freshman year. It was funny. I was like, "Let's see what we can do." Like, see if I can hide it at all. Usually, athletes all have the same book bag…. Everybody's going to know you're an athlete. So, I had like a different book bag, different water bottle. I would try to dress different. I wouldn't wear a lot of team apparel, and just see how it would work. And that's so funny, because you walk in. It's like, "Oh, you play football?" Like, I'm talking about off rip like before you even sit down, before I say, "Hi, my name's

Doc," like, "Oh, you on the football team? That's cool." It's just like automatic. It's almost

like second nature.

The negative stereotypes can, at times, make student-athletes feel their peers assume the athletes

have deficient academic capabilities. These negative emotions can lead to negative actions

including wanting to hide their athletic identity and being frustrated about the questions they

receive from their classmates, faculty, and other university guests. As Clyde noted at one

moment during our interview, just by his looks, people assuming he does not have much to

contribute:

I would say it was kind of negative because it's like, does that mean you're looking at me

and you're already assuming the worse on me? And I mean, I really don't care for other

people's opinions, but at the same time, that's their view of society, and that's their

perspective on life is just seeing somebody like me and automatically assuming that I

don't have that much to contribute to educated conversations.

Through the challenges of being one of a few, black male student-athletes continue to be

"othered" in their academic settings. This feeling of "othering" emerged in the data, with Doc,

Justice, and Clyde detailing the impacts of being forced to live in an environment centered on

anti-Blackness that was perpetuated by their faculty, peers, and university guests.

Dehumanizing Consequences of Anti-Blackness in College Sports

Despite student-athletes looking to overcome the stereotypes, taking pride in proving

their peers wrong and having to manage being one of a few in the classroom, there are additional

negative consequences from being in an anti-Black environment. In this study, two of the ideas

that emerged during data collection centered around toxic masculinity and stereotype threat.

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Toxic masculinity is defined as the idea that being a men or masculine is equated to domination, homophobia, and aggression (Harrington, 2021). This was most notably discussed by the participants from football. The participants from track referenced their participation on some co-ed teams as a reason toxic masculinity does not emerge. However, both Doc and Clyde noted the hyper-masculine environment of football can lead to behavior from their male peers that is toxic. Doc detailed this idea of toxic masculinity because of one's sport:

> Because of the nature of some of the sports, toxic masculinity can emerge, which is another stereotype that is then exhibited by the players. It's just funny, because the sport I play is technically the most manly sport or whatever, so I guess gender identity's never been a problem, but you do see a lot of toxic masculinity in football.

Both Doc and Clyde detailed the role coaches play in creating an environment that can be hyper-masculine and create space for a toxic environment to develop. They both shared how this is a negative aspect from their time playing football they try to recognize and counteract. As Clyde noted during our conversation, "That's more so when the identity of being a man and understanding that you really have a lot of responsibilities coming up in life really started to play a role." Doc also indicated:

> If somebody's not meant for the sport or whatever, you don't deserve to be name-called. They call them soft, call them weak, call them whatever. It's just unprovoked. Who yells that, right? But football [is] one of the most toxic sports for men at the end of the day.

This feeling of toxic masculinity can begin even earlier than college, as was described by Mercedes in his first sports memory. The cheers he received from his dad and other coaches let him know he had "done the right thing" by physically dominating his opponent. However, even as a young kid, Mercedes knew he had done something wrong and "felt bad for the kid." Despite

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this feeling, being praised for what he had done fueled Mercedes's want to continue to participate in sports and seek the same type of recognition from physically dominating opponents.

Stereotype threat also emerged in the data and is defined as the anxiety people experience when they risk confirming a negative stereotype of their group (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). The participants noted there were instances where their teammates or they themselves fell into a place where they lived up to the negative expectations others set for them. Clyde illustrated this when talking about the impact of sports on his student-athlete peers, highlighting that the time spent within their particular sport means student-athletes do not get to establish themselves with another identity before they get to college: "We already don't know who we are. So, a lot of people when they get there, they just fall back into what everybody expects of them." At times on college campuses, the participants noted that their peers believed their only contribution was within their athletic role. Student-athletes can also hold this sentiment due to the amount of time they put into preparing for their sport. The impact of stereotype threat and how it can influence the behavior of black male college student-athletes was highlighted in this finding. Still, Clyde seemed to be aware of the challenges associated with each and looked to avoid that becoming his normal course of behavior.

The impact of stereotypes is a concept that emerged from the participants. They detailed the pride that came from overcoming these manifestations of anti-Blackness while also acknowledging the impact oppression and microaggressions can have on their college experience. The participants also detailed the role faculty and peer stereotypes have on their college experience. Despite stellar academic achievement, attempts to hide their athletic self, and

a focused effort to limit stereotype threat, participants still noted stereotypes' negative role on their college experiences.

Pride in Telling a Different Story

Despite the challenges faced due to living in a culture of anti-Blackness, study participants took pride in crafting a different narrative than what was believed by their peers. This issue is further complicated due to the racial and athletic identities of the participants and many of them attending Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). A significant portion of the experience for student-athletes on their campuses in this study was the process in which they were able to rewrite the narrative held by faculty and peers. Specifically, the Black male student-athletes recounted dispelling the negative stereotypes of their faculty and non-athlete peers.

One way of telling a different story is finding ways to excel in spaces outside of athletic competition. For nearly all the participants, this meant publicly excelling in their academic pursuits. Both Clyde (the local hero who enrolled at Elite University) and Mercedes (the business major and shotput expert) shared examples of academic overachievement in class, highlighting the uniqueness of their experience through the intersectionality of their racial, athletic, and academic identities. Clyde spoke of a class assignment where he received the highest marks. Not only was he surprised, but his classmates were surprised at how well he had done. Clyde remembers going through the beginning of the assignment:

> I was number one the whole time and that took a lot of work, a lot of investment. I was
> just really proud of myself for that because I'm one of the only Black kids in that class.
> So, I don't know, it just really felt like I exceeded the expectations that were already just
> put on me, and it felt like the professor was really surprised. So, I don't know, it was
> fulfilling in a way. It was like, yeah, I'm that guy. I'm not just another face.

Mercedes also took a lot of pride in dispelling stereotypes from his peers and faculty. Mercedes ensured he did not alter his approach or values when entering spaces where he knew he might be stereotyped. He understood the power of articulating himself as a Black man and how that was surprising for some: "I've gotten a lot of, 'Wow, I didn't expect you to say that.' Just a lot of undermining me because of the color of my skin." Mercedes continues to explore this idea of positioning himself by highlighting how his attire is an important part of who he is, and he would not alter his appearance to "fit-in" academically with his peers at The University of the South:

> I'm not afraid, I wear my earrings. I wear my chain, and I'm going to do right in class. You know what I mean? I have big Black dude tattoos, tatted up, earring, chain. It's just like that paints a picture for most people, right? But when I stand up and speak, it's different. Then when you hear that I have intelligence. It's different!

By taking the time to invest in their academic and racial identity provided Clyde and Mercedes a sense of pride in their academic work and their holistic selves. Dispelling perceived predetermined stereotypes and expectations centered on their race and athletic abilities gave these two participants leverage in the classroom, centered on their ability to move beyond the perceptions of their peers and faculty members and overachieve academically.

Blaze, Justice, and Clyde, two sprinters and a defensive lineman at Elite University, shared a sentiment in the academic space, with a focus on proving others wrong who carried pre-determined stereotypes about both student-athletes and Black men. Blaze utilized both his academic and athletic perspective to provide details on how Black athletes at any school, but particularly a highly selective academic institution often has the capabilities to excel academically. He noted the enjoyment of disproving the feelings from those who felt like he was not able to keep up academically. Blaze shared, "I'm a very capable person doing the things that I

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say I want to do. It's not just like I'm walking around campus, head empty with no ambitions outside of just track." Blaze felt the need to also share that many of his peers in athletics at schools like Elite University are also capable academic scholars. Justice, both a track star and chemistry major, also carried this sentiment. Justice described the importance of his peers knowing they are all trying to reach the same goals, despite participating in varsity athletics, and he would not alter who he was or what he valued as he navigated a culture of anti-Blackness at Elite University. "I will still sit the same way, laugh the same way, make the same jokes. I don't care. And I do that because I'm not going to make myself fit in with anyone." Once Justice felt comfortable being himself, he discussed that he often must assure his classmates and faculty he was academically capable of excelling, particularly as a chemistry major. "It's the same way, I'm here because my intellect is as strong as yours. Race doesn't matter or anything like that. We're the same people, we're trying to get this degree." Clyde also took pride in being an athlete and a scholar. He described getting into a debate in his philosophy class and how the outcome was not what his peers expected…and how that made him feel:

> I remember having a philosophy class and we're going there, and damn near I was just ripping up whatever the next person said. And the teacher always wanted me to contribute. So, when I talked and you get an argument with somebody about philosophy and you win, all right. You know what I'm saying? And they get more mad because I'm a big Black guy on a football team, you really didn't expect anything from me. So yeah, I will say that's been a fun experience and just like, I don't know, seeing how other people view us…it's crazy.

Through the quotes and stories detailed above, the majority of the participants in this study share the ways in which they seek to overachieve academically, and the pride associated with overachievement due to the stereotypes placed on them by their faculty and peers.

Theme 4: Finding Their Voice

Finding their voice is the final theme that emerged while analyzing the data centered on the experiences of Black male student-athletes, their storied experiences, and the coach's role in their experiences. The ability to advocate for their needs as a student-athlete was key to navigating college. During data collection, participants detailed finding new ways to advocate for themselves, their communities and their needs with coaches, educators, and advisors. Participants finding their voice enabled them to have life-changing experiences including leading marches, educational excursions focused on diversity and identity, and being seen as pillars on their teams and communities. From participant stories and observations several voices emerged, representing subthemes. The subthemes include finding their leadership voice, academic voice, racial voice, voice with their coach, and social voice (as illustrated in Table 6).

Table 6

Theme 4: Finding Their Voice

Subthemes	Topic patterns/Nuances of meaning
Finding their leadership voice	● Becoming a role model for peers ● Making good decisions
Finding their academic voice	● Understanding academic identity ● Evolution to academic focus
Finding their racial voice	● Comfort in discussing race ● Exposure to new ideas ● Being in a new environment
Finding their voice with their coach	● Discussing more than the sport ● Being present in difficult times
Finding their social voice	● Meeting diverse people ● Being exposed to new cultures

Finding Their Leadership Voice

Participants shared stories of how, over time, they were able to accept their roles as leaders on their teams and communities outside of athletics. While most grew up expecting this, there was a process of developing their leadership style on the field, the track, and beyond. In classrooms on class projects and in their communities, participants developed an ability to advocate for the needs of others before their own.

Doc noted how his peers look to him and want him to tell his story. Whether it be in class projects, meeting their families, or being a voice of reason with university administration, Doc has become someone who carries his voice beyond the football field. "And especially me being an athlete, a lot of times, it's funny, because you're not viewed as being one of the smarter ones in the class, and a lot of times, you have to take lead in the group." Reflecting on this was compelling for Doc. As he shared, "…it's just been pretty cool to see the kind of impact that I've

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kind of left on some people, as well as learning a lot of new things, learning how to be around different crowds myself." He was used to stepping up and being a captain on the football field. So, he attempted to "use what football taught me" in his classroom activities.

The evolution of becoming a leader in the community also comes from peers believing the participants made good decisions. Mercedes discussed this, noting his role as a captain meant he had to encourage his teammates, especially during difficult times. This encouragement was seen while seeing Mercedes in competition, uplifting his teammates at meets and encouraging them during their respective events. For Mercedes, thinking through how to become this kind of leader is all about being different and not succumbing to peer pressure. As he described:

> No one says that you have to go out to party. No one says you have to smoke weed. No one says you have to drink alcohol to have fun, you know what I mean? So, I feel like instilling those values in me, helps me make better decisions.

Finding Their Academic Voice

Participants also provided insight into developing skills to advocate for their academic needs. For many of the participants, they described initially being focused on their athletic capabilities. However, this perspective has changed despite their significant athletics time commitment. As time progressed, they began to realize they were more than athletes and needed to explore their academic interests to prepare for life after their sport.

The ability to have these conversations with peers and coaches began for most participants with a salient understanding of their academic identity. As Mercedes shared during the interview, his academic identity was, "Knowing what type of students you are and maximizing your potential or efficiency with what you know can do." This feeling was particularly true for Blaze, who was attending college on an academic scholarship. As he noted,

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"I can't let these things be imbalanced. I can't let too much of track or being an athlete take over to the point where I'm not performing academically." Blaze detailed how he needed to regularly have these conversations with his coach, and his ability to have them grew since he started at Elite University, enabling him to "be at peace with my academic and athletic achievements."

The evolution of athletic identity over time while in college was also detailed by study participants. Both Justice and Jett shared the need to have their academic identity grow over time. Justice noted that his athletic identity "was definitely more prevalent" when he began college. However, over time Justice stated, "But then junior and senior, once it's time to graduate, career, all that good stuff. The next step is grad school. Definitely hone in on academic." Jett also evolved and was able to have this conversation with his coaches-particularly about his focus on academics:

> Previously in my freshman and first semester of my sophomore year…It felt more like I had to just be an athlete and all of my classes had to go with my athletic schedule. But now I feel like my athletic schedule fits with my classes, because that's what I'm here for. I'm here to be a student, actually get my education and that's what I think is overall most important being here.

Making this fundamental shift proved to be key for Jett as he pursues his degree in psychology. He describes the ability to "actually create space" for his academic pursuits. This ability to focus on class means, as Jett described, "I can be a true student, a real student, not just an athlete, and actually dive into my classes and find classes that I'm really interested in regardless if they conflict with my practice schedule." This for Jett was critical, allowing him to shape his career and what he wants to learn.

The growth of study participants who, in data collection, detailed how they first understood their academic identity and then underscored how their identity focus changed overtime is an astute observation. This growth and development of their academic voice enabled participants to pursue their academic interests along with their athletic interests. This voice is crucial as the narrative continues to be re-written about the academic expectations of black male college student-athletes.

Finding Their Racial Voice

The role of race in shaping the athletic, academic and social experiences of black male student-athletes was significant. For the participants, the impact of managing COVID-19 and the racial unrest that captured the world's attention in the summer of 2020 also shaped their racial experiences in college. The participants shared as they found their racial voice, they had to be comfortable discussing issues impacting Black people, finding the empowerment to grow in this space, and having to manage racial aggressions while playing sports. The participants detailed how they have seen positive change over time, but still needed to find affirming spaces in order to feel safe while in college. These challenges and experiences led to the participants becoming activists, participating in marches, and talking with their coaches about race.

The participants described how they found their role as advocators for equality grew during their college experience, enabling them to be comfortable discussing race. For Doc, this started from his first conversation with his new head coach. In their initial meeting, they did not talk about football. Instead, they discussed race on campus. Doc said his coach's first question for him was, "What is the racial environment like on campus." Doc described being presently surprised and in shock by this question:

Kind of out of nowhere he asked me, "Hey, how's the racial climate here?" And I was

taken aback. I was. I was shocked, because in our program, I'm kind of the one who

heads all the social justice stuff, and kind of spreads the word about it, by doing things

about that around the team, but he asked me that, and I kind of knew this dude might be

for real.

This initial interaction has led to Doc feeling comfortable coming and talking with his coach

about anything and highlighted how his coach was able to help him develop this voice by being

so open and affirming.

The racial voice for our participants continued to grow as they were exposed to new ideas

during their racial identity journey. For Mercedes being able to attend a conference focusing on

race and equity, in Montgomery, Alabama helped expose him to new ideas. Mercedes believed

this invitation to attend the conference was extended due to his campus activism. Mercedes was

able to lead campus marches and speak before large crowds as he helped the athletic department

at the University of the South and his coaches better understand the experience of himself and his

peers. For Mercedes, this was important because he wanted to be sure those around him knew

what was important as he developed his identity outside of track. "And I've been able to speak

on panels about being African American in a predominantly white institution and how I've been

able to just do that for the last five years." For Mercedes, the biggest item he wants to remind his

peers, faculty, and staff is that he cannot "leave his Black skin at home, it comes with [me]

everywhere." A racialized environment is one he must navigate daily, and Mercedes hopes his

peers will be supportive long after the racial unrest of last summer is over:

And I know it probably won't change after I leave, but as long as I'm here, I'm definitely

going to try to push for that because at the end of the day, you got these white people

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concerned about me being Black after George Floyd is killed. But at the same time, this is

the skin color that's on me every day. This ain't something that I can't just be like,

'Okay, now it's time to talk about this,' I got to live it.

These two examples of how co-curricular experiences allowed participants to have

developmental opportunities due to finding their racial voice is a key component to

understanding the storied experience of Black male student-athletes.

Being in a new environment was also a key component of how study participants

described finding their racial voice while in college. For many, this voice felt new because they

had come from predominately Black environments. Participants moved into spaces where they

had to learn to advocate for their needs. Blaze detailed moving into a new environment and

feeling the "shock" of Elite University and a general lack of racial diversity. Blaze stated it was

striking coming to Elite University, "because the student body and track team are predominately

white." Blaze used this as an opportunity to grow and share insight with his teammates and

coaches on managing the experience of being a Black student-athlete. "I found this was an

opportunity to share my story with my peers in a meaningful fashion." Justice, a teammate of

Blaze at Elite University, also highlighted this shock of being in a new environment and what it

meant for advocating for his needs as a Black student-athlete. As Justice described, "Oh man.

You might go through a culture shock." For Jett, managing the experience of being called a

racial slur impacted the way his racial voice evolved with his teammates. "We had a white

person say the N-word on the team and there's a whole outlash of that, being treated differently

because we are Black…." This incident led to Jett and his teammates having a meeting with their

coaches to discuss their experiences as Black athletes on the team and advocate for change. Jett

noted that, previous to this incident, he might not have been brave enough to approach his coaches for the conversation:

> We had, there's nine or nine of us, and we had a sit-down conversation with our coaches about how they're treating us and how it's affecting our performance, how we're being treated differently because of our race. Because we're not the favorites, we don't get feedback on how our injuries are perceived a lot differently than and taken care of differently than our white peers and how that had related.

But he is glad he did, and he started to see a "tangible difference the next time I was injured" from the coaches in how they treated the Black athletes and talk about their development and injuries.

The study participants described how they were able to find their racial voice during data collection. From conversations with coaches to racial immersion weekends, the participants were able to grow their abilities to understand and confront the complex race questions that surround their sports. This ability to find comfort in discussing race, exposure to new ideas, and being in a new racial environment are all critical components to furthering conversations about the voice developed by study participants.

Finding Their Voice with Their Coach

Participants in the study noted the process for finding their voice when communicating with their coaches. For these kinds of conversations to flourish, the student-athletes noted they needed to be more confident in managing stereotypes, expectations, and perceptions they had from their coaches and non-Black teammates. As with most items, this effort to manage expectations led to circumstances of both great and challenging communication. Due to their commitment to one another, often both the student-athletes and coaches found ways to value the

truth even if it is not what the other party wanted to hear. This was observed at both track meets and football game. The participants and coaches truly understood what to say and when to say it to one another. This timing on communication was impressive to see. As Clyde entered the game, his coach whispered something in his ear that made him smile before taking the field. He then promptly went out and recorded two tackles. For Blaze and Jett, their coach pulled them to the side of the track before their race. They had each not performed in the way they wanted, and attendees could see the disgust on their faces. Their coach appeared to do his best to calm them down and reassure them they performed their best as he encouraged them to prepare for the next race. Truth serving as the foundation for the coach-athlete relationship enables both coaches and athletes to have honest conversations focused on growth and long-term planning for a potential of life within and outside the sport.

Blaze believed his coach works hard to connect with his team, especially the Black male athletes. This growth of the coach is, in part, due to Blaze and his teammates finding different ways to connect with their coach. "Coach and I, we have a great relationship. It is one that is built on trust." Blaze shared his coach is not always successful in building the bridges they believe are critical, but Blaze did share his coach is always willing to receive feedback and find ways to improve the relationship with his players. As Blaze illustrated, "It can't just be always about track…We've made sure that we're able to connect in other ways that make that a well-rounded relationship." Justice also details the ability to connect outside of sports, who shared that he talks to his coach consistently outside of practice. "I can be on break and he can just call me up and say, "Oh yeah, I went to this seminar, and I learned this, that and the other. Maybe you can use that?" Mercedes got excited when talking about his coach and how he listens to a variety of music and engages on social media. For Mercedes, this is important in order to relate to his

athletes. "Coach, he listens to the same music we do. He watches the same videos. It is just not something you would expect from a head coach. And we love it. We just love it." The ability to discuss things outside of sports is important in building relationships with student-athletes and helps them feel comfortable discussing more than sports in their conversations.

Finally, finding their voices with their coaches meant the coaches were present with participants during difficult times while in college. Mercedes had a dear friend take his own life. It was a very difficult time for Mercedes, and he leaned into his coach. "I went to practice and just broke down. And he came up, Coach Neismith, he came up and he just hugged me." For Mercedes, this moment was foundational in strengthening the bond with his coach and helping him find his voice. From that moment forward, he felt a stronger connection with his coach. He was able to tell him when he was going to be joining his fraternity, about wanting to go on the experience to Montgomery, and about personal challenges at home:

> He's the best coach I've ever had in my life. I can talk to him about anything. I talked to him about joining my fraternity. He said I needed to remain focused, but if I needed to do so, I could take a few days. You know? Just to take care of myself.

Justice had a similar experience. After the difficult meeting with his coach, they began to talk more every day. As racial unrest unfolded all over the country, Justice said his coach called him one day. Their conversation was short but ended with something Justice would never forget. "He just told me, 'Well Justice, I just love you for you.'" Justice noted from that day forward, he was always willing to talk to his coach. He felt they had cemented a bond to not only help Justice be a better sprinter, but for his coach to be a better man.

Finding their voice with their coach is a key component of their storied experiences. The participants detailed how, over time, intense situations enabled them to improve their

relationship with their coach. This improvement centered on being able to talk about more than sports and their coaches being present in their conversations. The ability to discuss more than sports and relate to the Black male student-athletes as people is an important component to the data findings.

Finding Their Social Voice

The participants shared how they were able to engage outside of athletics and academics at their institutions to develop their social voice. Whether it was meeting with CEOs, participating in Student Government Association (SGA) or attending conference to better understand the cross section of their academic, racial, and athletic identities, finding their social voice was a key part of the data shared by participants. This voice developed outside of sports by meeting new people and making good choices. The participants noted they had the chance to meet so many different types of people due to their athletic involvement, and this mattered for their personal and athletic development.

Study participants noted how athletics allowed them to have interactions with different people. Clyde described the number of international students and people from different backgrounds he has connected with since he started college. He has been, "amazed with the diversity and community" at Elite University and hopes this can continue once he is no longer enrolled. For Doc, outside of being with his teammates, the community he has built outside of athletics has also been a personal highlight:

> But I say the people and relationships. I mean, you meet a lot of good people, a lot of good people, from all backgrounds, from all socioeconomic statuses. You could talk to CEOs and talk to somebody who's not a CEO, and they're still the same person at the end of the day. It's just pretty cool.

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These connections points with new people are important for developing their social voice, due the exposure and cultural capital derived from learning something new. Study participants acknowledged playing sports gave them a chance to learn more about themselves and being exposed to new experiences. This is an important component of developing a social voice.

This ability to meet different people means the college social experience is one where they must make good choices. Boomer shared his coach telling him he needed to "make a choice" when deciding to go socialize over Homecoming Weekend or spend some time training. For Boomer, he was able to do both, and he appreciated the conversation he had with his coach when considering both options. Justice also noted this, saying his coach encouraged him to make sure he is surrounding himself with people who are building him up while in college. Justice took this to heart and takes pride in sharing with his coach how he is growing as a person both on and off the track. This growth and meeting new people are captured by Doc who stated he met a lot of "genuine people during his time at Elite University, which made the experience amazing." He was most pleased that he met people in his life who can help him "advance in life, whether that's athletically or academically. He concluded that he feels he can be himself and thrive in his environment. "Like, I was just so impressed with the relationships that I made in that short time. I just love the people here." Finding their social voice is connected to meeting good people and making good choices. The ability to do so as a black male student-athlete is even more pertinent. Study participants detailed their growth in each of these areas and how these experiences were beneficial in their personal development.

The ability to find a variety of voices was an important internal and external exercise for participants. Internally, the need to advocate for their own resources, champion their own development, and articulate their needs was a significant space of self-discovery. Externally, the

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ability for others (university staff, faculty and coaches) to see this growth further added to this self-discovery, is another key factor in the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes and adds to an understanding of their relationship with their coach.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I shared the data collection process and the data analysis components of this narrative study. After extensive rounds of inductive coding, I was able to develop codes, patterns, groups, and eventually themes to capture the shared and observed narratives from the participants. The findings yielded four themes which were explored in detail through sub themes. Each theme is described and given additional details to how it connects to storied experiences of Black male student-athletes and the role of the coach in their identity development. In the next chapter, I will provide conclusions and connections to the relevant literature based on what the participants shared in this study, highlight implications from the findings, and provide final recommendations for the continued literature related to the study of the coach-athlete relationship.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

The storied experiences of Black male student-athletes and the role of the coach in these experiences is the foundation of this narrative study. Research highlights while in college, student-athletes must manage multiple identities as they navigate rigorous schedule demands, personal development, and expectations from coaches, players, alumni, friends, and families (Beamon & Bell, 2010; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Griffith & Johnson, 2018). Research has focused on the athletic, academic, and social identities of student-athletes, each of which are developed during college (Cooper et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2019; Menke & Germany, 2019). The challenge many athletes face is the all-consuming nature of their athletic identity, which engulfs their academic and social identities (Rubin, 2016). Role engulfment has been linked to an increased focus on students' athletic experiences at the expense of other critical academic and social experiences that matter to persisting and thriving in college (Adler & Adler, 1985; Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010). College student-athletes must manage the pressure of winning, stereotypes from their peers, stereotypes from faculty, and their own aspirations for their academic and athletic success. This focus on success is what often drives role engulfment. There are several individuals who are essential to combating role engulfment, including academic advisors, faculty, family and peers. Often, coaches are seen as contributors to role engulfment. However, due to the amount of time athletes spend with their coaches, coaches play a significant role in reducing the over emphasis placed on student-athletes athletic identity.

Researchers contend that coaches play a critical role in the experience student-athletes have in college. Research on the role of coaches in the student-athlete experience has often focused on K-12 experiences, international competition, or professional sports (Hicks et al., 2016; Hodge, 2015). Within the literature, examples exist of others on campus (e.g., faculty,

academic advisors, peers, etc.) who assist in student-athlete academic achievement (Case et al., 2017; Comeaux, 2008; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Retting & Hu, 2016). However, because student-athletes spend a large amount of time with their coaches, a better understanding of the critical role athletic coaches play in their experiences and identity formation is warranted, particularly for Black male athletes.

In order to explore the identity narratives of Black male student-athletes, how their race and gender shape their experiences, and the role of their coaches in their academic and athletic identity development, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who play a Division I sport?

2. How do race and gender intersect and shape athletic, social, and academic identity formation for Black male student-athletes in Division sports?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between Black male athletes and their coach, particularly in navigating academic, social, and athletic identities and domains in Division I sports?

Narrative inquiry was used to explore the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes and the role of the coach in their academic and athletic identity development. Seven participants from three different institutions agreed to participate in this study. The institution types varied, including one private institution, one state institution, and one HBCU. The student-athletes responded to a request for participants, volunteered to be interviewed by the researcher, agreed to in-competition observations, and respond to a variety of photographs as a part of the data collection process. Data analysis consisted of an open coding process, where several patterns

emerged. The patterns were then arranged to larger groups. Finally, the groups were further explored leading to the development of four themes.

The first theme detailed how both expectations and exploitation were experienced by student-athletes. Subthemes included the expectations derived from early success, the exploitation that ensued from dedicated effort, and the coaches' role in balancing both expectations and exploitation Black male student-athletes must face. These subthemes were further detailed using quotes and observations shared by participants and noticed by the researcher. The second theme detailed how study participants built bonds with their teammates, families and coaches. Subthemes from this theme included the bonds built with teammates, the coaches being at the center of these bonds, and the external bonds built with family members and mentors. The third theme centered on rewriting their narrative and how study participants found ways to thrive despite being in an anti-Black environment. Both the negative impacts from anti-Black interactions and the pride in telling a different story were highlighted as sub-themes. Finding their voice was the fourth theme to emerge. Several subthemes emerged focused on the student-athlete and finding a variety of voices including their leadership voice, their academic voice, their racial voice, their voice with their coach, and their social voice.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I first present the conclusions and implications for each research question. Within this section, I also provide the connections between the conclusions and prior research. Next, I discuss the recommendations based on the conclusions and implications. Finally, I conclude this chapter by providing final reflections from the research participants.

Conclusions and Implications

Through the research questions explored in this study, I sought to better understand the narratives of Black male student-athletes, the impact of their race and gender on their college experiences, their relationships with their coaches, and the role of the coaches in their academic and athletic identity development. Each research question provided findings that were, in many ways, consistent with previous research. However, in several critical areas, the findings presented by the participants varied from what has been previously published and should be considered in future studies.

Discoveries based on the research questions are derived from the findings presented in Chapter 5. The first research question pertained to the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who played Division I sports. For this question, two conclusions are presented: (a) a solely positive family connection and (b) pride in achievement. The second research question included how race and gender inform the academic, athletic, and social experiences of Black male student-athletes. In response to this question, the conclusions center on (a) the ways study participants are not subjected to role engulfment and embrace both their academic and athletic identities to develop a holistic athlete identity, (b) the role of stereotypes as fuel for overachievement, and (c) their identity as activists and providing a voice for the voiceless. The final research question addressed the role of coaches in the academic, athletic, and social identity development of Black male student-athletes. Two conclusions surfaced regarding this question, (a) the coaches understanding led to participants identifying as people more than athletes and (b) the athletes emerging as active storytellers resulted from the coaches being active listeners. To position the discoveries from this research within the prior research, I connect each conclusion to

related research, pointing out similarities and differences between them and the current study. I, then, present and discuss the associated implications.

RQ1: What are the storied experiences of Black male student-athletes who play a Division I sport?

The storied experiences of the participants included the role of their families in their success and the pride they felt in their academic achievement. These conclusions are discussed in terms of the current academic research and then positioned in that research to show the nuanced differences in what was shared by the participants in this study. These differences are further explored and the implications from these conclusions are presented.

Families Were Always a Positive Support

All of the participants described the role family played in their academic and athletic experiences. The impact of family is discussed as a positive for student-athletes in academic research. However, instances exist where familial relationships are connected to negative outcomes for student-athletes, especially for Black males. In the current study, participants only shared positive experiences with their families, describing how these experiences led to positive outcomes in their academic, social, and athletic pursuits. Boomer, Doc, Jett, Justice, and Mercedes all shared stories of how their families assisted in training, attended all competitions, and still emphasized the importance of being a good student and citizen.

This finding presents a slight deviation to past research. While most of the research highlights the positive role families play in student-athlete experience, several studies discuss how families over emphasize athletic success, leading to negative outcomes for student-athletes (Beamon, 2010; Simiyu, 2012; Singer, 2016). Graham et al. (2015) studied the experiences of Black college student-athletes and found family (along with media and peers) add to the hysteria

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surrounding college athletics reinforcing athletic identity for student-athletes. Several researchers have reported families contribute to student-athletes' athletic identities. Beamon (2010) reviewed the experiences of retired college student-athletes and found families played a significant role in study participants feeling their athletic success was the most important outcome from their college experience. Menke and Germany (2019) further supported this finding after interviewing 14 participants who retired and played DI sports, each sharing family led to over emphasis of athletic identity, making it difficult to transition to life after sports. Focusing specifically on Black male student-athletes' experiences, Simiyu (2012) used both critical race theory and student involvement theory, finding families overemphasizing athletic success leave Black male student-athletes academic identity underdeveloped.

There are instance of family playing a positive component for Black student-athletes' experiences and identity. Harper (2012) studied the experiences of over 200 high-achieving Black males. For the participants in this study, family played a significant role in their success. While Harper (2012) included only Black male students, they did not differentiate between the student-athletes' experiences. Similar to the current study, Singer (2016) utilized narrative techniques to explore education and racism on campus, finding families played an important role in how Black male student-athletes respond to race while in college. While an important study that also used narrative techniques, the study solely focused on race and did not acknowledge the other factors explored in this study, particularly gender identity. Sato et al. (2018) explored how family played a positive role in student-athlete academic and athletic success, focusing on Black student-athletes at PWIs. Sato et al. (2018) used a different method to explore the role of family but did not focus on specific institution types nor a focus on the intersection of racial and gender identity. In the current study, I focused specifically on Black male student-athletes at various

institution types. This finding is a unique contribution to the literature acknowledging that the institution, family support, racial and gender background all play a role in experiences and the relationships Black student-athletes develop with their coaches.

The implications of families being a positive support are significant. In addition to research, news reports detail how family members push student-athletes and set extreme expectations for student-athlete success to meet the needs of the family. This undue pressure can lead to significant negative experiences for student-athletes and force them to feel the weight of generational wealth and exposure for their families through participation in sports. With this conclusion on families' positive contributions to Black student-athletes' experiences, opportunities exist to highlight how families can play a dual role of supporting student-athletes while also encouraging them to take advantage of both their academic and athletic opportunities and identities.

Being Their Own Storyteller: Pride in Academic and Athletic Achievement

The Black male student-athletes in this study conveyed the pride that came with significant academic and athletic achievement. Academically, the participants shared numerous stories on their classroom experiences and how they disproved racial and athletic myths carried by their peers and university faculty. Athletically, participants shared how their success in the K-12 setting propelled them to athletic success on the college level. This combination of academic and athletic pride built the narrative that these Black male student-athletes are capable of excelling in both athletics and academics.

Having pride in one's academic and athletic achievements is often described in the literature from the lens of college student-athletes as either achieving in their academic or athletic spaces, with little research focusing on success in both. Regarding academic success,

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Gayles et al. (2015) examined what student-athlete programs with elite academic reputations have in common. One key item the researchers found is these programs find ways to celebrate athletes' academic achievement. Cooper (2016) continued this line of research by detailing a how Black male student-athletes succeed beyond athletics by focusing on their academic achievements. While both studies provide thoughtful insight into the student-athlete academic experience, neither addresses how both academic and athletic achievement are significant for developing pride in Black male student-athletes. Harper (2012) did describe the experiences of high-achieving Black males and noted a variety of factors that led to their success, including family support, high expectations, and relationships with faculty. However, Harper did not focus specifically on Black male student-athletes leaving out an important component of the current research, athletic success.

Black male student-athlete athletic achievement is also detailed in the literature. Goings (2016) studied achievement of HBCU student-athletes and found achievement is mainly focused on athletics, not academics. Fuller et al. (2017) used quantitative tools to understand both Black identity and student-athlete identity. The authors deduced multiple aspects of Black and student-athlete identity inform success, with none being more important than athletic success and the role it can play on social and academic expectations. The current study differs due to using a narrative approach to explore the experiences of Black male student-athletes as well as centering both academic and athletic identity as catalysts for Black male student-athlete persistence and achievement.

Implications from the pride that comes from academic and athletic achievement are important contributions to the literature. For current student-athletes, taking the time to excel in both academic and athletic pursuits has become a critical component of their college experience.

This pursuit of academic and athletic excellence is important for coaches to consider as they work with college student-athletes, particularly Black men. This is an opportunity for the coaches to see Black male student-athletes as more than athletes—also as people. In this study, a shift in expectations for student-athletes emerged, with a more significant emphasis on the "student" aspect of their identity. Campuses and coaches should be prepared for this shift and find ways to support Black male student-athletes as they seek to be significant contributors in both the playing field and the classroom. This begins with coaches seeing student-athlete humanity, recognizing these athletes bring more to their sport than their athletic abilities.

RQ2: How do race and gender intersect and shape athletic, social, and academic identity formation for Black male student-athletes in Division I sports?

This research question sought to identify the ways in which race and gender mold the identity development of Black male student-athletes. Participants in this study described three distinct outcomes from the intersection of their race and gender. The first was the synergy derived from both their academic and athletic identities. Next, the participants used the need to survive in an environment of anti-Blackness as a fuel for success. Finally, the participants developed a focus on activism that impacted their identity development, particularly their social identity. Each of these conclusions are explored below.

Academic and Athletic Holistic Athlete Identity Development

All the participants in this study detailed how their athletic and academic identities served as compliments to one another rather than detractors from the other. This conclusion about a holistic approach between academic and athletic identity is a new outcome since researchers generally have detailed how athletic and academic identity work in opposition. This discovery of *Holistic Athlete Identity Development (H.A.I.D.)* provides a counternarrative to how Black male

student-athletes can utilize their academic and athletic identities to build their identities in each arena, which in turn builds their overall identity.

The prior research is rooted in the concept that athletic and academic identity are in disharmony and force student-athletes to develop one or the other. Cooper et al. (2017) took NCAA GOALS data to explore the experiences of college student-athletes across all divisions and sports. The authors found that an increase in athletic identity, no matter the sport or division, led to a decrease in student-athlete academic identity. Researchers also have detailed how having a high athletic identity impacts the development of racial identity, social identity, and career maturity (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Gayles, 2009; Stahura et al., 2016). Exploring the experiences of university Black male student-athletes, Bimper (2014) found that increased athletic identity, which was a predictor of student-athlete GPA, led to lower GPA for Black male student-athletes. Other researchers have identified a negative impact of athletic identity on academic identity that manifested in lower test scores, deciding on a less rigorous major, and decreased interest in doing research with faculty (Comeaux, 2008; Foster & Huml, 2017; Melendez, 2010). Each of these studies detailed how athletic identity engulfs academic identity. However, in the current study, H.A.I.D. emerged showing the importance of Black male student-athletes having the ability to utilize their academic and athletic identities to compliment rather than detract from one another.

By uncovering H.A.I.D. exists for the Black male student-athletes in this study a new version of athletic and academic identity is presented—one that acknowledges the value of student-athletes academic, athletic and social identities. Therefore, implications for both current coaches and student-athletes are significant. For coaches, considering how to leverage the excitement that comes from academic achievement could become a regular component of their

team culture. Hearing from study participants the pride that came from academic success and social integration means that same pride could be carried into athletic spaces, which could begin to change how people perceive athletes in academic spaces. For Black male student-athletes, the opportunity to excel in the classroom and on the field is a growing phenomenon, and there is a growing sentiment that people can do both well. Therefore, it is important to convey to future student-athletes they can excel both in their academic and athletic pursuits with the support of their coaches.

Crafting an Identity in an Anti-Black Environment

In their storied experiences, these Black male student-athletes also gave insightful details into how the words and actions of their peers, faculty members and advisors forced them to survive in an anti-Black environment and contributed to their academic and athletic identity development. Despite this being the environment created, study participants used this environment as motivation to achieve academic goals. This focus on using a challenging environment as fuel for achieving academic success while developing identity is briefly discussed in the literature, but rarely within the context of Black male student-athletes who play Division I sports. This finding is significant due to previous research that details the impacts of anti-Black racism and Black male student-athletes having to navigate spaces where they are negatively stereotyped. Participants in this study shared how they reveled in this anti-Black environment and how these experiences gave them the ability to further develop their identities, showcase to their peers and faculty their academic abilities and, in some instances, be academically superior despite, or, perhaps, because of their participation in varsity athletics.

The literature shares numerous examples of Black male student-athletes and the impact of anti-Black environments on their identity development and college experience (e.g., Boyd &

Mitchell, 2018; Harper, 2012). Three decades ago, Sallies (1993) directly explored the identity development associated with the "dumb jock" myth and its impact on Black male student-athletes. Steele (1997) provided the foundation by researching stereotypes and broadly describing the impact stereotypes have on individuals' identity development. Research continued about anti-Black sentiments, generally centering on the negative impact it had on student-athletes, particularly their identity. Yopyk and Prentice (2005) found that when stereotyped, student-athletes often succumb to the negative expectations and perceptions of their faculty and non-athlete peers. Stone et al. (2012) supplemented this idea by exploring student-athlete identity development through priming students with questions focused on various identities and giving the students assignments to complete. When primed with questions on their athletic identity, race and gender were significant factors since Black male student-athletes performed poorly on assignments in comparison to their non-Black and non-male peers (Stone et al., 2012). These findings differ from the current research study in a variety of ways, including not focusing on Black male student-athletes, using non-narrative techniques, and not highlighting the specific ways in which these stereotypes were used as motivation for both academic and athletic success.

Some research exists that detail Black male achievement, but the researchers do not specifically address Black male student-athletes' using anti-Black environments as fuel for their success. Harper (2012) conducted a qualitative study of over 200 high achieving Black males and detailed their ability to have academic success. While noting the anti-Black environment of many participants, his study did not focus on the experience of Black male student-athletes. Fuller (2017) found that, in some cases, stereotypes do help student-athlete performance. Within Fuller's study, the responses were generally negative with many participants detailing the negative impacts of stereotypes while on campus. Additionally, the study focused on all student-

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athletes and did not specifically highlight the experience of Black male student-athletes. The prior literature also detailed how Black males in college utilize anti-Black learning and social environments to persist, become student leaders, and reach their personal and professional goals (Boyd & Mitchell Jr., 2018; Harper, 2015). Despite providing insight into achievement while being in these anti-Black spaces, these findings utilize quantitative techniques and did not focus specifically on Black male student-athletes or their identity development.

The implications of Black male student-athletes finding ways to develop their identity in an anti-Back environment are significant due to the counter narrative it presents. Often, research describes the challenges Black male student-athletes face on campus. The current study presents these challenges, along with specific examples of how study participants used these challenges as the tool needed to achieve both academic and athletic success. For student-athletes, this is significant, particularly since the story of Black male student-athletes looking to survive a racially hostile college environment has been prevalent for the last half-century. The ability for participants to channel these challenges and develop their own racial, gender, and social identities within a positive frame is important. For coaches, the implications are also telling. As the current study notes, they play an important role in the Black male student-athlete experience. Their ability to support Black male student-athletes while in college outside of their athletic domain is a role they must not overlook.

Athletes as Activists

Participants also shared how their racial and gender identities played a critical role in the development of their role as activists. Often, activism is thought of as leading protests, carrying a megaphone, and leading a group advocating for systemic change. While there are study participants who did this, another important component emerged from their narratives—one of

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standing up to systems of oppression and advocating for a different experience for the oppressed. Many of participants in this study found ways to use their positionality to advocate for sustainable change in their athletic and racial communities, which, in turn, lead to identity development.

Prior researchers have shared a mix of experiences from student-athletes as activists and the role of activism on student-athlete identity development. Gayles et al. (2012) utilized quantitative techniques to explore the college student values and beliefs of student-athletes and non-student-athletes. The authors found no matter what sport, student-athletes tend to be less socially and politically active than their non-athlete peers. In fact, Renford (2017) discovered that most student-athletes feel there is a lack of political activism, which differs from college students in the 1960's and 1970's. Interestingly, the Black male student-athletes' experiences from the current study counter these prior discoveries. Multiple participants not only understood the role their racial identity played in conversations with coaches, peers, teammates, and athletic administrators, but they understood that racial and athletic identity included their need to engage as social activists in order to combat the anti-Black environment in which they existed.

There is a growing body of research detailing the student-athlete as an activist. Epstein and Kisska-Schulze (2016) detailed the role of student-athletes at Northwestern seeking to form a union with student-athletes in Missouri, protesting and indicating they would not play unless the governor resigned after the murder and inhumane treatment of Michael Brown. MacIntosh et al. (2020) used quantitative methods to explore the experiences of student-athletes and activism. The authors found men in general and White students tend to be less involved in protest than women and students of color. Furthermore, the authors discovered race and gender were significant predictors on student-athlete involvement in forms of activism. Taken together, the

quantitative findings from MacIntosh et al. (2020) and the qualitative discoveries from the current study seem to indicate that Black male student-athletes are more involved in activism on campus. By using qualitative methods, I believe an important aspect of this activism is how Black male student-athletes' intersectional identities seemed to contribute to their role as activist while undergoing their own identity development.

The implications and ability to explore the role of the Black male student-athlete as activists begins to re-envision the past stories. Numerous Black male student-athletes were at the center of the Civil Rights Movement. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Russell, Jim Brown, and Paul Robeson were all active participants in campus boycotts, sit-ins, and protests throughout their college experience. They also had professional athletes as role models to champion their efforts including Muhammad Ali and Jackie Robinson. Exploring the parallel experiences of the 1960s with the racial awakening of the last five years could begin to disclose the too-often silenced stories of student-athletes and their activist identities. The retelling and re-storying of these narratives, especially utilizing qualitative tools, has the potential to amplify the voices of change and recenter the Black male student-athlete as activist and begin to alter negative and pathological stereotypes.

Within this section, I discussed the conclusions of H.A.I.D., crafting your identity in an anti-Black environment, and the student-athlete as an activist as key findings related to the Black male student-athletes' various identities and how these identities inform one another and function together. Implications for each of these ideas is significant for present-day Black male student-athletes. One implication includes the importance of seeing how athletic and academic identities complement one another. The next implication centers on the importance of how identity development can, and often does continue in environments that are hostile. Research often

highlights being in an anti-Black environment yields a hostile identity. However, these study participants utilized their hostile environments to develop an identity further rooted in their Black identity. Finally, the findings highlight the role of student-athletes as activists. Implications here include the growth of the student-athletes advocating for justice beyond the boundaries of sports. This could (as it did in the past) lead to continued efforts around social, economic, and political justice for oppressed populations, particularly Black people.

RQ3: What is the nature of the relationship between Black male athletes and their coach, particularly in navigating academic, social, and athletic identities and domains in Division I sports?

The participants shared various details about the relationships with their coaches, highlighting the successes and challenges of building these relationships and how these relationships contributed to their academic, social, and athletic identities. Based on the findings, two conclusions were evident. First, the participants believed that the relationships with their coaches resulted in seeing themselves not just athletes- but as people. The second conclusion was the evolution of the coaches' role to one of an active listener and the student-athlete identity growth to that of an active sharer. Both perspectives are explored below.

More Than an Athlete: The Perspective of the Coach

From the observations and interviews, study participants detail an evolution of coaches seeing them as college athletes, but also as college students who bring more than their athletic identity with them to practice and competition. Numerous study participants detailed specific instances of their coaches recognizing their humanity, their coaches sharing they cared about them as more than athletes, encouraging them to take time away from the team to protect their mental health and listening when they shared personal and athletic challenges. The ability for

study participants to have honest, and sometimes difficult, conversations with their coaches and have their human perspective valued, particularly in college athletics, is a welcomed discovery. The outcome from these conversations details how the participants perceived their present-day coach as acknowledging them as holistic student-athletes who must manage life inside and outside of their athletic sphere. This realization is an important factor in Black male student-athletes' athletic, academic, and social identity development given previous literature detailing coaches has focused solely on the athletic aspects of the student-athlete experience.

The literature and lived experiences of college student-athletes both supports and refutes coaches seeing student-athletes as both students and athletes. Jowett and Frost (2007) examined the experience of professional Black international soccer players, finding respect through identity development is a key component in building relationship with coach. Kassing and Anderson (2014) studied the experiences of professional athletes and their coaches, finding athletes with more perceived power in their identity development process are less likely to disagree with perspectives shared by their coach. McGee and DeFreese (2019) explored psychological identity outcomes of professional athletes in the coach-athlete relationship. The authors found the closer athletes are within the coach-athlete dyad, the less likely the athlete is to experience burnout. This conclusion is significant since having a close relationship is an important component of seeing athletes as people. Recently, Powers et al. (2020) shared coaches are often focused on competition, not metal health support for their athletes. This focus on athletic success can force athletes beyond their physical limitations and create spaces where coaches may not realize the personal impact this is having on athletes. While all these studies are important to understand the role of coaches and seeing athletes as more than athletes, they were done in professional sports

settings, often did not use qualitative tools, and did not all focus specifically on Black males, thus missing several significant elements of this particular study.

In examining the role of high school coaches in communicating with college coaches about the way to recruit specific athletes, Hicks et al. (2016) discovered that   coaches emphasized the importance of focusing on the new recruits as an athlete who pursues both academic and athletic success. While also significant, neither study focused specifically on the experience of Black male student-athletes and neither used narrative as a framework to explore these ideas. When focusing on the experience of college student-athletes, Bjornsen and Dinkel (2017) explored the narratives of coaches and their experience with student-athletes'   identity shifting as they retired from their respective sports. The participants shared the growing need to recognize the athletes as people and the role of their coaches in student-athletes developing this understanding. The current study highlights the experiences of Black male college student-athletes   while utilizing a narrative framework, which is a unique contribution when exploring the coach-athlete relationship.

The implications of Black male student-athletes perceiving their coaches view them as not just athletes- but as people- would be another seismic shift in the literature. The narrative has often centered on coaches having demands for success, thus pushing student-athletes to solely focus on their athletic goals and not any other personal goals. However, to have coaches who encourage personal development outside of athletics, suggest time away from their sport to focus, and want to know the details of their student-athletes lives beyond sports is a telling shift. The ability of a coach to see a student-athlete as more than an athlete could yield positive results inside and outside of competition.

As coaches recognize student-athletes as athletes, the implication of recognizing student-athletes as students is also significant. The participants noted how their coaches seeing them as more than just athletes assisted in their relationship as well as their academic and social identity development. It is imperative coaches understand how connecting with student-athletes in their academic and social pursuits will assist in the athlete's finding success in their academic, athletic, and social pursuits.

Two examples of coaches utilizing their role on the team as a listener to impact the student-athlete experience were discussed by both Mercedes and Doc. They each discussed the importance of being able to engage in experiences that focused on their racial identity. First, coaches should find ways to encourage team captains and team members to attend these types of experiences. Both Doc and Mercedes shared attending these activities enabled them to reflect on their success and impacted their athletic success and relationship with their coaches. As a next step, it would be beneficial for the athletes who have the chance to attend these types of activities to return and share their experience with their teams. This is significant because 1) student-athletes listen to each other and 2) the coach providing the space for student-athletes to share these experiences signals to the team the coach cares equally about their athletic and co-curricular pursuits. Coaches are able to set a tone that student-athletes still respect, and coaches finding a way to use this authority as an opportunity for collective team learning would both implicitly and explicitly share with the team that student-athletes matter as a whole person-including their academic, athletic, and social identities.

Shifting the Balance of Connection: The Coach as the Listener and the Student-Athlete as the Storyteller

The perception of the study participants that their coaches viewed them as the storytellers and took on the role of an active listener as participants developed their academic, athletic and social identities is another important component of outcomes from this study. This conclusion is compelling since in this current research study, the roles have been reversed. Participants detailed how their coaches have evolved into a role of active listener, and student-athletes have the agency to become the storyteller. This additional evolution in the coach-athlete relationship and the identity of each party in this relationship is particularly important due to Black male student-athletes often being described as exploited by college athletics (Harper, 2015). The ability to advocate for their needs and have a coach listen is a marked shift in the experience of Black male college student-athletes.

The literature details the importance of communication and the difference it can have on the experience for both between coaches and athletes, focusing particularly in professional sports. The ability to understand motivating athletes through effective communication impacts athlete burnout and reduces stress (Isoard-Gautheur et al., 2015). Sandstrom et al. (2016) researched the experiences of professional athletes and their coaches, finding through effective feedback loops and intentional conversations, coaching relationship can evolve. The authors noted this shift happens through active listening. The commitment of coaches, athletes and motivation was further explored in a cross-cultural frame (Jowett et al., 2017). The key finding was the important role coaches played in building intrinsic motivation for the athletes, which required listening to their stories to better understand what would motivate them as people (Jowett et al., 2017). Kassim and Boardley (2018) examined cross-cultural communication and

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discovered no significant differences across various cultures in how communication impacts an athlete's experience. Further exploration found of effective coach-athlete communication reduces conflict and increase athlete motivation (Davis et al., 2019).

The current study of the Black male student-athlete, their identity development and their relationship with their coaches differs from these prior discoveries in several ways. First, the current study focuses on college student-athletes and having coaches who work with large teams. The majority of previous research exploring the coach-athlete relationship focused on coach-athlete dyads, where coaches are working with athletes in one-on-one sports or circumstances. However, I highlight how study participants shared their coaches must juggle the expectations and lived experiences of a variety of student-athletes. Additionally, the previously referenced research does not solely focus on the experience of Black male student-athletes and their relationship with their coaches. Another distinction in previous research is researchers often only focus on athletic identity development, leaving out insight into academic and social identity. The current study highlights participants academic and social identities as significant contributors to a positive college experience.

The implications from the coach's role evolving to one of as active listener and the student-athlete becoming a more active sharer is an important outcome from this study. Coaches finding the space to allow student-athletes to advocate for their needs has the potential to reduce burnout and friction between coaches and their teams. This shift in perspective is also important, due to coaches having to see their athletes as whole people, not just as athletes. To listen and actively empathize with student-athletes, coaches must see them as more than just athletes. This human element is a critical new component that the study participants noted from their coaches, further contributing to study participants feeling they could be their whole selves in their athletic

environment. The added complexity of a shift in the communication between coaches and Black male student-athletes is also an implication worth noting. Student-athletes having a more vocal role with coaches could shift power dynamics in a way that makes the experience uncomfortable for some who are accustomed to a more traditional coach-athlete power dynamic. Due to the impact of race, this power dynamic is further complicated with the social and historical perspectives of Black student-athletes who are traditionally coached by White men. Despite these factors, the importance of the participants being allowed to share their stories and the coaches actively listening to their needs is an important aspect from the research.

Recommendations

Three recommendations are provided based on the responses to the research questions in this narrative research study. Each recommendation aligns with various aspects of the research questions and should be considered for implementation across various sports teams and institution types. The first recommendation focuses on the academic and athletic success of current Black male student-athletes and how this success should be emphasized. The second recommendation details the need for coaches to have continual opportunities to understand the modern Black male student-athlete and the complexities of coaching this population. The third and final recommendation calls on researchers to explore the idea of holistic athlete identity development, where both the academic and athletic identity work in tandem to enhance the college experience of Black male college-student-athletes.

Academically and Athletically Gifted: The Current Black Male Student-Athlete

The current Black male student-athlete cares both about their academic and athletic opportunities (Comeaux, 2022). Resources from athletic departments, university life, and student services should be devoted to assist the development these areas, not solely athletics. Mercedes

and Doc each having the chance to develop their leadership potential outside of athletics by attending conferences to explore aspects of their racial and social identity are examples of collegiate development opportunities and resources. The ability to have coaches, institutions, and campus partners provide resources for Black male student-athletes to enhance their leadership qualities will benefit the athletes, coaches, peers, and communities.

Coaches and the Modern Black Male College Student-Athlete

There are many factors impacting the present-day Black male student-athlete including their understanding of race; the lingering effects of a global pandemic; the opportunities related to name, image, and likeness; and their own personal development (Comeaux, 2022). Coaches play a significant part in how Black male student-athletes survive and thrive now and in the future. Therefore, it is imperative coaching programs are developed that provide insight for coaches on the growing challenges and opportunities accompanied with supporting Black male collegiate student-athletes. These initiatives should focus on student identity development and could be led by university student affairs administrators, trained facilitators, or former student-athletes who have a knowledge and background in the college student-athlete experience. Examples include having student-athletes participate in conference, leading workshops where athlete can learn about more than their athletic opportunities and remembering that student-athletes are also students. If possible, student-athletes should return from these experiences to share what the opportunity to engage in these types of activities meant for them individually and what it can mean for the team. The coach being able to acknowledge the humanity of their student-athletes will have significant impacts on the relationships both coaches and athletes have with each other.

From Role Engulfment to Holistic Athlete Identity Development (H.A.I.D.)

In nearly all the literature, the sentiment is athletic and academic identity create conflict for student-athletes. However, in this particular study, both athletic identity and academic identity of participants complement each other to create holistic athlete identity development for study participants. Therefore, resources should be dedicated to studying H.A.I.D.. Focusing on the importance of H.A.I.D. could shift the narrative and paint a more accurate picture of the modern Black male student-athlete. Funding efforts to utilize qualitative and quantitative methods to study this new phenomenon across different factors including institutional type, NCAA Division, head coach in comparison to position or event coach, race and gender.

On the Horizon

The landscape of collegiate athletics currently presents many challenges both coaches and athletes must work through in order to continue to have a productive relationship. Each challenge presents difficulties and opportunities for both coaches and athletes. Several of the most pressing items on this exhausting list includes the impact of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) sponsorship opportunities, the lingering impact of COVID-19, continued racial tensions in the United States, and the impacts of athletes and their mental health. Each of these ideas is explored below.

Impact of Name, Image, and Likeness (N.I.L.)

The growth of N.I.L. has been the most impactful change in the NCAA in recent memory. Prior to rulings in California and now several other states, college student-athletes were considered amateurs and could not be compensated for their name, image, or likeness, despite university budgets making massive profits from student-athletes. With the new rulings set in place, student-athletes are being compensated at a record pace, and it has had a significant

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impact on the coach-athlete relationship especially in revenue-generating sports. Now, in football in men's basketball, an emphasis has been placed on boosters' financial support to athletic budgets in order to attract top recruits. This change appears to benefit large institutions with donors who are willing to give significant financial gifts in order to recruit top talent. This also shifts the focus of attending an institution from growth and athletic development to receiving the most NIL compensation. Recently, recruits have been rumored to have been promised as much as $13 million over the course of four years to attend college (Taylor, 2023). The growth of this trend will continue to impact the coach-athlete relationship when student-athletes are selecting their future athletic home.

Race in America

The Black participants described the challenges associated with continuing to participate in their sports and the on-going discussions related to race in America. While this may have been a heightened experience due to the institutions all being located in the South, there needs to be particular attention paid to how coaches and athletes have conversations about race while building team community. There will certainly be a continued focus on the role of athletes in seeking social justice and positive sustainable change for their communities. Coaches must be prepared to lean into these conversations if they hope to build strong relationships with their players in order to continue to be successful both within and outside of competition.

Athletes and Mental Health

There is growing attention to the role of the stress associated with athletics, athletes balancing their schedule demands, and mental health. Recently, high-profile athletes have taken time away from competition to manage their fatigue and focus on their mental health. This impact is not lost on college student-athletes and must be something coaches consider as they

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look to support their student-athletes to build a strong team culture. Before coming to college, the anxiety amongst K-12 students has grown exponentially in recent years (Sparks, 2022). Students are bringing these anxieties with them to college and coaches must support their student-athletes if they hope to build a winning team culture.

A Bright Future

While a lot has changed over the course of studying the experiences of Black male student-athletes and the coach-athlete relationship, there is reason to be excited about what is forthcoming for both coaches and Black male student-athletes. The greatest reason for optimism is what was shared by the participants. Despite each participant acknowledging they can have difficult, and at times, tense conversations with their coaches, they each, at some point, noted the love, admiration, or respect they had for their coach and their craft.

- *I think that my interaction with Coach the last three years, that's been the best coach relationship I've had in my life.* — Shotput king and business major who was "Ready for More", Mercedes Lewis

- *This coach has done so much for me. I love him for that.* — HBCU Giant and Triple Jump expert and "member of the pack", Boomer Holt

- "Yes, sir. I think my relationship with my position coach, it's interesting, because he understands me. I don't give him enough credit for understanding me." – Psychology major and Elite University Sprinter who had "A record setting pace" Jett Thomas

- "Well Justice, you know I love you because you're you. That meant a lot to me- Chemistry Major and All-Conference Performer who said, "All Eyes on Me", Justice Lancaster

- "He's a really, really smart guy. And it's a thing that I've learned is that…I have to know what I need to do for me."- Academic Guru and basketball avoider who reminded you, "Don't sweat the technique" Blaze Williams

- "I love my coaches. I love my teammates."- Big Time recruit and Elite University All-Conference Defensive lineman who carried a "Champion Legacy" Doc Champion

- "So, it's damn near a job. It's like my boss. And I feel like that creates a culture and it's just all love. You know what I'm saying?"- Elite University Defensive lineman and "bringer of the energy" Clyde Reeves

This understanding for their own experiences, the love for their coach, and focus on their relationship is what will sustain coaches and student-athletes working together. These sentiments also further highlight the role coaches play in these individuals developing their athletic, academic, and social identities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Invite

SHARE YOUR STORY:
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENT-ATHLETES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR COACHES

Dear student athletes:

My name is Jordan Hale and I am a current doctoral student at North Carolina State University, pursuing a Ph. D in Higher Education Policy, Research, and Analysis. To complete my academic coursework, I am exploring the African American Male athletes' experiences who are **participating in varsity sports** and **their relationships with their coaches** to better understand the role coaches play in both athletic and academic identity development. To understand this topic, I am seeking to hear the stories and narratives of African American male athletes from a variety of college campuses. **This is where you come in!**

To participate in this study, you must:	By participating, you are agreeing to:
- Self-identify as a Black male undergraduate student-athlete	- Sign an informed consent form that details the study parameters
- Been awarded a scholarship for your chosen sport	- Be interviewed via Zoom once and a potential follow-up interview if needed
- Participate in a varsity sport	- Be observed at a team practice or in competition

If you meet the qualifications and are willing to share your story, please email Jordan Hale at jhale84@gmail.com or via phone at 919-717-3681.

Consent Form

Title of Study: Black Male Student-athletes and the Role of the Coach in their Athletic and Academic Identity Development (eIRB # 24803)
Principal Investigator(s): Jordan Hale; jchale3@ncsu.edu; 919-717-3681
Funding Source: None
NC State Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Joy Gaston-Gayles; joy_gayles@ncsu.edu; 919-513-0924

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

You are invited 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, and to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of the experience of Black male student-athletes and how their academic and athletic experiences are impacted by their relationship with their coaches, and the role of their coaches in their academic and athletic identity development. We will do this through observing team meetings, observing practices, and two (2) interviews.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. You may want to participate in this research because you will get the chance to share your stories about how you developed you academic and athletic history and the people who helped in this process. You may not want to participate in this research because these stories may be triggering and difficult to discuss.

Specific details about the research in which you are invited to participate are contained below. If you do not understand something in this form, please 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 in this research, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office. The IRB office's contact information is listed in the *What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?* section of this form.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the role of coaches in Black male student-athletes academic and athletic identity development.

How many people will be in the study?

There will be approximately 2-4 participants in this study.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?

In order to be a participant in this study, you must agree to be in the study and:
- Be a varsity scholarship athlete at the research site
- Identify as a Black male
- Participate in a revenue-generating sport (football or men's basketball)

You cannot participate in this study if you do not meet the inclusion criteria or:
- You decide not to participate
- Decide you do not wish to be interviewed or observed

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do all of the following:
1. Participate in two (2) interviews. One will be approximately 60-75 minutes. The other will be 20-30 minutes.
2. Agree to be observed in one (1) practice and one (1) team meeting.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study is approximately 180 minutes.

Recording and images

As a part of this research, I would like your consent to audio record our interviews. Please initial next to the sentence(s) that you agree to:

_____I consent to be audio recorded.

_____I do not consent to be audio recorded.

Risks and benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. The risks to you as a result of this research include lingering feelings when participants share stories related to the highlights and challenges associated with competing in sports and the relationships that have been developed over time.

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. The indirect benefits are participants getting the chance to retell their sports stories and contribute to new methods for student-athletes to develop their relationships centered both on the student-athletes academic and athletic identity development.

Right to withdraw your participation

You can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. To do so, just stop any research activity that you are doing or contact the principal researcher, Jordan Hale at jchale3@ncsu.edu and 919-717-3681. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Joy Gaston-Gayles, at joy_gayles@ncsu.edu and 919-513-0924. If you choose to withdraw your consent and to stop participating in this research, you can expect that the researcher(s) will redact your data from their data set, securely destroy your data, and prevent future uses of your data for research purposes wherever possible. This is possible in some, but not all, cases.

Confidentiality, personal privacy, and data management

Trust is the foundation of the participant/researcher relationship. Much of that principle of trust is tied to keeping your information private and in the manner that I have described to you in this form. The information that you share with me will be held in confidence to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Protecting your privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance to me. There are very rare circumstances related to confidentiality where I may have to share information about you. Your information collected in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety. In other cases, I must report instances in which imminent harm could come to you or others.

How I manage, protect, and share your data are the principal ways that I protect your personal privacy. Data that will be shared with others about you will be re-identifiable

> **Re-identifiable**. Re-identifiable data is information that I can identify you indirectly because of my access to information, role, skills, combination of information, and/or use of technology. This may also mean that in published reports others could identify you from what is reported, for example, if a story you tell us is very specific. If your data is re-identifiable, I will report it in such a way that you are not directly identified in reports. Based on how I need to share the data, I cannot remove details from the report that would protect your identity from ever being figured out. This means that others may be able to re-identify from the information reported from this research

Compensation
There is no compensation for participating in this study.

What if you are a student?
Your participation in this study is not a course requirement and your participation, or lack thereof, will not affect your class standing or grades.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the student researcher, Jordan Hale at jchale3@ncsu.edu and 919-717-3681. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Joy Gaston-Gayles, at joy_gayles@ncsu.edu and 919-513-0924.

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 the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at

Consent to participate

By signing this consent form, I am affirming that I have read and understand the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered. I have chosen to participate in this study with the understanding that I may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

Yes, I want to be in this research study.

Name_____

Today's Date _____

No, I do not want to be in this research study.

Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix C: Email Communication with Campus Partner A

Re: Jordan Hale checking in from Chapel Hill

████████████████████████

To: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>

You're welcome. ██ agreed to do the interview. I copied you on his email. Real good brother on the track and field team.

Sincerely,

████

From: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2022 2:54 PM
████████████████████████
Subject: Re: Jordan Hale checking in from Chapel Hill

Man thank you so much. I appreciate it!

J Hale

Jordan Hale
Assistant Dean
Undergraduate Business Program (UBP)
p: 919-962-3750
e: jordan_hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu

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From: ████████████████████████
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2022 12:09 PM
To: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>
Subject: Re: Jordan Hale checking in from Chapel Hill

Ok great, I am following up with two athletes now to serve as point people.

From: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 9:05 AM
To: ████████████████████████
Subject: Re: Jordan Hale checking in from Chapel Hill

All great questions. ████████████████████████
████████████████████████

J Hale

Appendix D: Campus Partner 2 Outreach

Re: Hello and check-in

▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

To: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>

Hi Jordan,

Happy to help if I can but in full transparency ▨▨▨▨ will have more connections at this point. Go ahead and send me the flyer and I will see if I can help! Congrats on moving forward with this!

▨▨▨▨

From: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>
Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 6:28 AM
To: ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨
Subject: Re: Hello and check-in

Hello ▨▨▨▨

I hope all is well. I wanted to send a note over letter you know that after a lot of back and forth I have received IRB approval. While I know you mentioned you could not share email contacts, I would love to forward you a flyer about the study and see if you could send it out to the student-athletes at ▨▨▨. I would love to have some folks participate. If that works, I can send the flyer later this week.

Also, if you do have names of any Black men who participate in varsity sports who you think would be ideal participants, I would love it if you could build any connections with these student-athletes. I am hoping to have 6-8 participants and think I will have three for sure. Any help in getting the last few would be amazing.

I also know you have a lot on your plate. I will also be reaching out to ▨▨▨▨. If there are any other suggestions of people to potentially contact, please let me know.

Thank you for the help and have a great day!

J Hale

Jordan Hale
Assistant Dean
Undergraduate Business Program (UBP)
p: 919-962-3750
e: jordan_hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu

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From: ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨
Sent: Friday, September 16, 2022 12:01 PM

Appendix E: Campus Partner C Outreach

Re: Greetings from Chapel Hill!

Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>
Thu 10/13/2022 8:05 AM

█████████████████████████

📎 1 attachments (235 KB)
Participant invite graphic.pdf;

Here is the flyer, ██████. Thank you for the help.

J Hale

Jordan Hale
Assistant Dean
Undergraduate Business Program (UBP)
p: 919-962-3750
e: jordan_hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu

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From: Hale, Jordan <Jordan_Hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2022 10:31 PM
To: ████████████████████████████
Subject: Re: Greetings from Chapel Hill!

Thanks, man. I will work on it tonight.

J Hale

Jordan Hale
Assistant Dean
Undergraduate Business Program (UBP)
p: 919-962-3750
e: jordan_hale@kenan-flagler.unc.edu

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