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Abstract

Public education, which is meant to be open to everyone, faces the daunting challenge of educating all the children who enter its doors. This paper will discuss the intersection of gender and race in shaping students' educational experiences, especially those of Black boys. It is based on observations and analyses of classroom involvement and teacher-student relationships that identify the problems teachers encounter in helping students who lack the necessary preparation and are not interested or engaged in learning. Although the previous reformation of education effectively covered the needs of girls in such fields as mathematics and science, young men (and primarily Black boys) in this case need attention and support. The results show that Black boys, and indeed not the majority of the student population, nonetheless tend to make up a disproportionate proportion of the at-risk group. Quite a number of them have a problem in the basic academic skills and self-regulation, and are exposed too early to adult themes like sex, drugs, and violence. Making generalized assumptions and setting low expectations are often the result of teachers who are uncomfortable and do not know how to handle these students. These trends, even though not representative of every Black boy, are so powerful that they perpetuate

systemic bias in the mainstream education system. These disparities should be noted and addressed in order to enhance equity, academic participation, and growth among all students.

Keywords— African men, challenges, adulthood, policy change, educators, injustice

Introduction

This article examines the issues faced by Black youth in general and, precisely, the challenges faced by Black boys who are becoming more and more disengaged from mainstream society to a far greater extent than Black girls. Among Black boys, secondary school completion rates remain disproportionately low, whereas incarceration rates continue to rise at an alarming pace (Austin, 2018). The question that drives this analysis is therefore twofold: What difficulties affect their expectations for attending and completing faculty? Moreover, what can be done to assist? Addressing these questions requires acknowledging that instructional inequality is not, in reality, a matter of individual failure but a systemic crisis embedded within broader social, economic, and cultural frameworks. Annie's (2020) study shows that 78% of African American students in Chicago, Illinois, complete high school. According to Bowman et al. (2018) and Pearman et al. (2019), African American students' high school completion has risen over the last 5 years. However, they continue to lag behind their female peers and students from other racial groups.

The adverse life circumstances faced by African American young men are well-established over time (Bauer & Berkley-Patton, 2023). Research such as Starling (2024) and public discourse by Echelman (2025) and Barker et al. (2023) continue to highlight the troubling experiences of African American males, and the need to address and respond to the narratives many faces is critically important. According to Doors (2020), too many Black boys are not being successful and are underachieving, and are

entering the criminal justice system. A single parent is increasingly raising these children; often, they are deprived of the basics of a young mind; they attend schools that do not meet their needs, and there they face numerous obstacles; they are underrepresented in academic courses critical for college admission (Perera, 2020). Some will succeed against these probabilities and make it out, but many will not. They are headed toward prison, not Yale. I cannot explain what comes about because although little Black boys are in love with the school, inescapably, some practices obtained in their homes and community environments begin to surface at school. Black boys that I have taught were more energetic than other students, less academically engaged, settled conflicts more often with physical, aggressive behaviour, and were frequently disrespectful when they were being disrespected. Almost all of them started school loaded with passion for learning and dreams of the future, but by Grade 4, sometimes earlier, they were too often on their way to becoming unmanageable young men.

Methodology

Research Design

In this work, a qualitative research design is used to explore the structural foundation of inequality and a way forward to equity and inclusivity. The qualitative method was selected for its ability to provide in-depth insight into human experience, social situations, and the meaning people give to their educational experiences (Tenny et al., 2022). This design allows us to investigate the real life of Black boys not as impersonal statistics but as personal, emotional, and cultural accounts that serve as indicators of systemic forces at large.

According to Willy & Newell-McLymont (2021), qualitative research aims to comprehend the group's attributes to a social or human issue. The issue of this type in this research is the continuous schooling and social marginalization of Black boys in school. The paradigm is consistent with an

interpretivist paradigm that focuses on the cognition of phenomena through the researcher's perspectives and situates those perspectives in historical and social contexts. Critical theory also informs this methodological position, as it questions the functioning of power, race, and inequality in educational systems (Busey et al., 2023). Through the qualitative method, this study does not just describe, it questions the institutional norms that recreate inequities. The emphasis, as such, is not on what is occurring, but on the reasons it is occurring and how teachers could contribute to inclusive change. Moreover, this research is characterized by the features of autoethnography and narrative inquiry. The researcher, as an educator who has worked with marginalized students for a long time, includes his or her experiences as Part of the interpretive data set. Autoethnography acknowledges the researcher as both observer and participant, whose thoughts can be considered valid sources of knowledge (Keleş, 2022). Similarly, narrative analysis appreciates stories as units of experience that make sense (Sochacka et al., 2021), and, in this regard, the researcher will be able to attend to the multifaceted emotional, cultural, and institutional dynamics that shape the learning processes of black boys. Reflective narratives, classroom observations, and anecdotal accounts enable the data to be analysed in multiple dimensions. By integrating scholarly literature, lived experience, and professional reflection, the research design situates personal observations within the wider socio-educational context. The choice of a qualitative design was due to its emphasis on empathy and voice, which allows the study to present Black boys not as data but as human beings hindered by multilayered processes of being different or belonging, and by discrimination. In qualitative narrative, the research seeks to shed light on and promote practical changes that would narrow the gap between equity as principle and equity as practice.

Understanding the Social Context

Low college attendance presents an extreme challenge for many students; instructional success lacks social attraction, while identification with street life provides an experience of belonging and popularity. More needs to be discovered about resilience and coping strategies for Black men so they can lead wholesome, efficient lives. Society sends endless messages to these young men, telling them they're outsiders searching into a global that does not need them. Many of those young men stay up to those messages, and the prediction will become self-gratifying.

Social and Structural Barriers

My instinct tells me we cannot place this entirely on our own faculties. These kids face an uphill struggle from day one. In the pivotal early years, we should offer focused intervention at the front quit of these lives. Instead, we spend more on regulation enforcement and prisons at the end. Men with crooked facts tend to be avoided by employers, and young Blacks with spotless data suffer by means of affiliation. Rosen et al. (2021) explain that being young and Black is often enough to lead to dismissal from employment, even if all application standards are met. I could guess that more Black dropouts are in jail than running. There is likewise a critical need to equip incarcerated people with the competencies essential for successful reintegration into society. The struggles many younger people face today must serve as a collective call to action for educators, policymakers, and groups alike.

Data Reflection and Observational Insights

If we are to address the underachievement of Black students, we must acknowledge the problem. Data reflection illuminates the challenges. When we disaggregate the data, we cannot ignore the dismal achievement gap between Black boys and other students. In all communities that I visit, black boys are still achieving less, thus the pressing need to do something about it. I clearly remember one afternoon when I took my mostly Black students

to a nearby shop to congratulate them on their excellent test results. It was only after months of hard work that they were able to gain a mere reward of ice cream on a hot summer day. The storekeeper, upon seeing me and twenty-five Black boys, dashed to the door and banged it, after which he ordered us to beat it. I wished at that time that the barriers these boys would encounter in their lives would be removed, with this single bad impression, most probably brought on by baseless terror.

Even though the concept of open racism and discrimination seems to be irrelevant nowadays, due to the development and the shifts in social attitudes, this case serves as evidence of racism. It was a disturbing and discouraging event that made a significant impact on me. It underscores a larger problem of several young Black people, who tend to be more closely followed by the customers' employees and guards, regardless of how they dress and behave. This trend has represented a widespread stereotype that identifies black men as criminals. The fact that I am always aware of my racial identity, since in most cases I am the only Black person in a certain setting, is a fact that I cannot avoid, and even many others cannot avoid.

Racial Disparities in Achievement

A closer study of the racial disparities in faculty fulfillment highlights clear racial divisions over who benefits from faculty and who does not. Socially, emotionally, and academically, black college students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds have struggled to excel in our faculties (Rochmes, 2024). The underachievement of African Americans, particularly African-American males, is one of the most troubling issues in education (Cokley et al., 2012). According to Wilson (2014), a significant number of African-American adult males have struggled to find their place in society.

Exploring Race, Culture, and School Performance

The tenacious school failure of black boys must prompt educators to invite the difficult yet obvious question. What, if anything, do race and lifestyle

have to do with their pervading classroom performance? The serious problem for their academic and socio-emotional well-being is not entirely their fault. These boys have been raised in a neighbourhood of battle and disorder, born of mother and father who were frequently absent, young, and inexperienced. They are in a state of demanding ache, that is notably underestimated and not fully recounted by the college machine that seeks to attain, train, and enhance them. The challenges of reaching, education, and developing Black men are large and sundry. Schools need to understand those demanding situations and be prepared to explore alternative procedures to viewing the arena, education, and studying styles and educational relationships which might be precise to Black grownup adult males. Similarly, educators need to apprehend that this particular manner of being is simply as complicated for other university students.

Cultural Change and Educational Responsibility

We are all inside the understand of the excessive social cost of such underachievement; however, the motives for underachievement remain complicated and puzzling. If we trust in the transformative strength of education to enhance social fairness—social justice—this assertion will become a clean, however effective, crucial. If some teens are not succeeding, we need to identify the barriers to their learning and eliminate them. What is not always so simple is the cultural change needed to bring this approximately.

Result

Case Illustration: DeAndre

I graduated from a public college and recently graduated from University. My college research has regularly been marked by discouragement rather than motivation. Several instructors held low expectations for my capabilities, and their attitudes contributed to a cycle of disengagement and frustration. A pivotal moment occurred whilst one trainer helped me understand that my reactions had aligned with the very expectation's that

others had set for me. That popularity transformed my outlook and behaviour. They had a pool inside the body of workers' room, approximately, of those who might no longer graduate, and my call was at the top of the list. When I learned of that challenge, I became determined to prove myself. I knew I was capable, and I demonstrated it by attending summer school and working diligently to succeed.

I was damned to let them have the last laugh. I graduated and went to College, and I can say I did it on my own. I often wonder what was going through some of those teachers' minds when I walked across the stage. All I ever wanted was a teacher who gave a shit about who I was, offered some words of encouragement, and told me they believed in me. I see all these black kids today, and I feel their pain. Their home life is shit, and their school life is shit. What kind of life is that?

Persistent Inequality and the Broader Social Impact

Many young African American men overcome the barriers to their success despite the adversity of their circumstances (Alfieri, 2019). However, Carson (2020) explains that the fact remains that African American men are jailed at a much higher rate than their white peers, and continue to rank last in indicators of social, health, and educational outcomes. African American men are ranked disproportionately worse on nearly all indicators that educators and social scientists use to measure the educational and social strength, progress, and health of people in the United States. It is as if practically nothing has changed with the schooling experience of black kids over the last two decades. The lack of advancement is astonishing. Moreover, here we are in 2024, faced with inadequate answers to the same questions. This article will focus on the uncomfortable issue of racial disparities in education.

Educator Reluctance and Structural Racism

While awareness is an important first step, there remains a widespread belief that structural racism is a relic of the past. Often, educators are

reluctant to confess that disparities exist between their students. This is partly due to the common but false belief that recognizing such differences equates to promoting a racist agenda. Alternatively, Part of our joint downfall in attending to the needs of Black males is the risk of acknowledging that they are constantly being measured up to a white middle-class benchmark from which they often stand apart. This perception of fear, fuelled by political correctness, hinders rather than helps our collective efforts.

Stereotypes, Media, and Identity

When I plead for greater understanding and acknowledgment of the distinctness between Black students and their peers, I am not referring to biogenetic or developmental differences. All such theories are scientifically unsupported and a misuse of time to consider. However, we should be aware of the social and emotional experiences that all students bring to the classroom. The frequent inescapable perception of Black males does not often include being academically successful. Kocić (2017) defines Black males in the media as often being typecast as criminals and misfits who are unable and uninterested in being responsible, contributing members of society. Therefore, they face a never-ending struggle between the self-fulfilling prophecy of living out these flawed characteristics and finding a new space —a better space — where they can find their true self. These faulty scenarios leave a negative perception of Black males who follow them when they enter our schools.

Coping and Adaptation

Studies like Berkowitz et al. (2017), Carson (2020), James (2019), and Jeffers (2017) about Black American males have mainly focused on them as an endangered species that are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system and noticeably absent from learning institutions.

These pessimistic views hurt the African American community at large and African American males specifically. (Kohli et al., 2017).

This persistent distraction from who they should be reduces them to a passive role in their educational attainment. This manifests in conditions wherein Black men are disrespectful and disruptive in school, but calm, aware, and responsible in places like the residence of God or in an area in which they may be visible and heard.

Black males have advanced coping mechanisms to cope with the uncertainty about how to navigate their gaining knowledge of environments. More than a few have perfected the capacity to dismiss or suppress these misperceptions and pursue achievement. This happens in effective colleges that construct sturdy relationships with their students and fee them for who they're. Day after day, students grapple with the war among their real selves and who society expects them to be. Educators have a vital role in helping students overcome the resulting low expectations and apathy. Society treats the undereducated with little mercy and leaves them with very little hazard of competing effectively in an international economy. Even effective schools that do realistic matters for his or her students continue to fall quick of doing proper by using the underserved college students inside the system. Together, we ought to embody mastering for all and the ability of each student.

Discussion

Transforming Educational Culture

Institutional subculture remains a defining affect on academic effects. Boeske (2023) explains that cultural change requires leadership and a collective willingness to examine statistics, improve cognizance, and open talk among team of workers and groups. Effective colleges awareness on prone and at-threat college students, building high expectancies that raise the complete gaining knowledge of community. Ten years in the past, recognizing difference as a course to equality become radical; now,

personalization is commonplace wisdom, although nevertheless difficult to enforce. Through systematic information use, targeted interventions, and emotional intelligence programs, faculties can tailor education to the wishes of man or woman newcomers. Addressing assumptions about race, gender, and sophistication through expert communication allows educators to recognize bias and shift views. When difference is recognized undoubtedly, the threat of labelling diminishes, commencing the way to inclusion.

I will by no means overlook the words spoken by the 17-year-olds I visited in prison after they received their high school diplomas. "You believed in me," he said when I asked how we helped. Those phrases keep resonating with me whenever I visit a college and study boys who sit in the back of the school room, appearing disengaged. Opportunities to engage with them, in my opinion, aren't constantly available. Transforming instructional outcomes and addressing the challenges faced by Black males extends beyond improving support programs. It requires a comprehensive and sustained willpower—something I have deeply apprehended through years of experience in designing and imposing such obligations.

As Noguera (2003) states, "They are much more likely to act out inside the school room and keep away from toughing themselves academically (Pray, 2017). Recognizing that Black males are not merely passive victims but may also be energetic marketers in their failure means that interventions designed to help them must take this into account. Changing regulations, creating new packages, and opening new possibilities will accomplish little if these efforts are not followed by strategies to actively engage Black men and their families in taking responsibility for improving their circumstances. Institutionally, this can require programmatic interventions aimed at buffering and offsetting the various dangers to which Black adult males are mainly vulnerable. However, to be effective, such initiatives must also involve efforts to counter and transform cultural patterns and what some have called the 'oppositional identities' adopted by Black males that undermine the importance they attach to education."

It is universally accepted that one of the most potent influences on attainment and underachievement is school culture—the attitudes and behaviour of staff—how they think and feel about children, as much as on pedagogy. Cultural change is not easy and requires leadership from the top, analysing the facts, raising awareness, and opening dialogue among students, staff, and the community.

In this test-driven culture, schools often fear that focusing on minorities will be detrimental to overall school performance—that equity and excellence are incompatible. However, research into effective schools seems to confirm my experience—that a clear focus on the most vulnerable and at-risk of underachieving creates a learning community that results in higher expectations for everyone. Ten years ago, providing equality by recognizing difference was a radical idea – as was the rational, research-based intellectual approach to school improvement. Today, personalization is the received wisdom, but it is still hard to achieve in practice.

Throughout my career, we started with facts and used performance data more intelligently, providing teachers with detailed knowledge of their students' capabilities and prior achievements. We analysed a range of hard and soft data, which enabled us to set appropriate yet challenging targets for individuals and groups and to measure our success in helping them achieve them. This also informed the targeting of a range of intervention programs that focus not only on academic skills but also on emotional intelligence and self-image. Individuals and groups were targeted for closer monitoring, and a wide range of intervention programs was available for varying literacy and numeracy levels and needs.

This approach can be more contentious than it sounds. Looking at differences and the needs of specific ethnic groups meant confronting the thorny issue of teacher attitudes towards black masculinity and correcting assumptions about black parents. This can mean asking uncomfortable questions about gender and race. To make the 'socially invisible' visible, time invested in staff development is essential, opening a dialogue about

research findings and how they can be addressed in each school context. In schools where difference is recognized positively, there is a holistic approach to closer monitoring of at-risk groups, individual education plans, and a whole-school program of interventions without the risk of labelling, discrimination, or alienation, since the approach is personalized and includes all children.

Researcher Reflection and Conclusion

I believe that reaching, teaching, and developing Black boys is a vital and achievable goal. This notion is not a declaration of hope but, more readily, a result drawn from my teaching and learning experience and an extensive body of research. Therefore, it is reasonable for schools to do whatever it takes to change the academic trajectory of Black students radically. The truth is that some schools successfully meet all their students' needs. To level the playing field, we have to institutionalize equity and equal access to the benefits the system offers, but recognize that this may require differentiated treatment. We have to help children whose families cannot. I view education as an "all-in" endeavor that can succeed only when the whole child's needs are met.

A forecast is no longer needed to fret about failing another cohort of Black boys. It is too late for that; we have already lost a generation of black men in education, health, wealth, and parenting. The matter in question is whether we will lose every generation of Black boys hereafter to street life, inadequate education, unemployment, father truancy, and gun violence. The apathy in the Black community about the future of our Black boys is frightening. We need to think about efforts within our inner-city communities themselves to rebuild and recapture the lives of the vulnerable, whose lives are imploding and are now obscured by cynicism.

We do not do enough to protect the livelihoods of Black boys who are being ravaged in record numbers. Who will initiate and advance the economic wellbeing of African American communities? Who will be the backbone of

strong families in the African American community? Who will young Black boys imitate as they bloom into men? Where is the wrath of the African American community at the ruin of its boys? Where are the blueprints and the supportive responses to transform this? What can we do?

Not all Black males struggle; numerous are doing fabulous work in their communities, at school, at places of worship, and living exemplary lives. However, too many have multiple babies with multiple baby mothers, thereby creating another generation of black children who barely know or see their fathers. Addressing these issues is Part of a body of work I am deeply passionate about. The way I see it, it comes down to respect and status. How do the youngest black boys attain this? Well, you can become a hip-hop star, be a baller on his way to the league, be a bad man with street smarts, or be a ladies' man with girls in all city boroughs. How can we best prepare our boys for this new age? We need further analysis of black identity and its implications for African American sense of belonging, hope, academic achievement, and intellectualism by examining the role of self-esteem, the hurdles that lead to academic difficulties, and the roots of academic motivation.

In conclusion, it is not personal failures of the Black boys that have led to failure and marginalization in education, but rather a historical, cultural, and institutional imbalance. By means of qualitative reflections, narrative inquiry, and lived experience, the study shows that structural racism, implicit bias, and deficit-based assumptions remain influential on how schools interact with and do not interact with Black male learners. The evidence highlights the urgent need to shift from reactive interventions to proactive, equity-based school cultures. Educators need to be open to culturally responsive pedagogy, mentorship, and curriculum layout that legitimize Black identification and uphold excessive educational requirements. At the coverage level, it is crucial to recognize the financing inequalities, the hiring of diverse educators, and the professional development of anti-racist practice. The way ahead is, eventually, through restoring schooling as a

space of belonging, dignity, and empowerment. Black boys will thrive as college students, leaders, and individuals of society, whilst teachers, families, and communities work together to dismantle systemic obstacles. It can change- but no longer without collective willpower and the willingness to look where no one has been searching for a long time, and to do what nobody can deny anymore.

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