EXPLORING AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL AGE MALES’ PERCEPTIONS OF AGRICULTURAL-RELATED YOUTH PROGRAMS IN URBAN SETTINGS

A Dissertation in
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by
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Abstract

Agricultural-related youth programs (i.e., 4-H, FFA) are designed to allow young people to reach their fullest potential and to develop skills and knowledge to make the best better in their lives. However, involvement in these agricultural youth programs by African American males has been limited in recent years. Little information exists regarding the effectiveness and perceptions of agricultural-related programs among urban youth. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the perception of ethnic identity development, community involvement, and experiences among African American high school males (ages 13-18) in urban areas in Pennsylvania and how these factors influence their participation in agricultural-related youth programs.

Two public urban high schools and one urban charter school with agricultural-related programs were selected to participate in this study. A sample of 300 African American high school age (13-18) male participants was selected for the survey, and a random sample of approximately 20 participants was selected for the focus groups. The goals of the mixed method study were to (a) determine how young Black males who participate in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males’ self-identify was measured; (b) identify how young Black males involved in agricultural-related programs and non-involved Black males perceive community involvement; and (c) explore the experiences of involved young agricultural-related Black males differ from non-involved Black males within similar urban communities. Data were collected using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R) revised instrument, questions through a community involvement questionnaire, and focus groups.

The findings indicated that African American young males find agricultural-
related youth programs beneficial, but not tailored for minority audiences. Volunteer and adult mentoring played a major role in youth participation in programs offered. Based on these results, the researcher concluded that these males felt gaining access to agricultural-related youth programs were a barrier to participation due to other internal and sometimes external problematic issues that contribute to a lack of involvement in agricultural-related youth programs.
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**Dedication**

“Even hope may seem but futile, when with troubles you’re beset, but remember you are facing, just what other men have met. You may fail, but fall still fighting; don’t give up, whate’er you do; Eyes front, head high to the finish. See it through.” - Edgar A. Guest

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Dr. Christine E. Smith; father, Maurice D. Smith, Sr.; sister, Traci S. Carter; brother-in-law, Cassein Carter; nephews, Shaun and Corey Carter; Richard Jr. and Sheryl Adkins, Devin Jones, Holloway family, Elliott family, Smith family; VSU friends and family; Teshema Urquhart; and in memory of my grandparents Robert and Dolly Elliott, Robert and Rosa Lee Smith; uncle, Stuart Smith; cousin, Tavonne S. Elliott; and cousin Delphine Claiborne. I would like to thank my family for their non-stop prayers and support during my graduate studies.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Positive Youth Development (PYD) focuses on building skills that youth need to have in order to be successful, contributing members of their community and society. In environments with structure and support, youth can gain opportunities to engage in skills that include problem-solving and decision-making. After-school and extracurricular activities can be an asset for youth who seek engaged learning and social skills. Metsäpelto and Pulkkinen (2014) indicated that extracurricular activities are adult-led and differ from the focused K-12 school curriculum in providing many opportunities for youth to gain knowledge or skills outside of the normal hours of school. Studies have identified linkages among positive outcomes, civic engagement, mentoring, and life skills for youth (Brown & Evans, 2002; Cherng et al., 2014; Mahoney et al., 2005, 2002). Out-of-school time has been an interest in today's society. Many youth who leave school and remain in their community do not engage or have limited participation in programs or educational activities after-school. But why is this so?

Simoncini and Caltabiano (2012) believed that after-school programs should be set up to actively engage youth’s cognitive, social, and even physical development. By having these types of after-school and enrichment programs, youth can be exposed to more experiences and gain life skills. Eisman et al. (2016) noted that participation in organized activity can lead to positive development for healthy living—this can occur in a broad range of structured and supervised activities, some of which may utilize curricula in K-12 schools, community centers, churches, and other civic groups. In addition, extracurricular activities are also important for many youth living in socioeconomically
disadvantaged areas where youth face many negative risks and struggles to succeed (Eisman et al., 2016). Afterschool educational enrichment or leadership clubs, sports, arts and community-based programs for youth take place in venues such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and even 4-H programs, where activities are offered during regular school hours or after school (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012).

Extracurricular activities also offer more hands-on learning experiences for youth out of the classroom, providing further assistance by offering school content that has positive academic results (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). After-school and extracurricular activities enhance the experience, knowledge, and life skills that youth will need to be successful moving into young adulthood. Activities after-school also serve to inspire youth to think about attending college or engaging in other educational aspirations (Farb & Matjasko, 2012).

Agricultural-related youth programs are formal and non-formal programs tailored for youth on agricultural education instruction, natural resources, and related topics in-school or after-school, such as agricultural leadership, urban gardening/horticulture, nutrition, agri-science, and/or STEM-related clubs or programs that provide youth with healthy living, learning, literacy, leadership, professional development, life skills, and citizenship opportunities. (Phipps, 2008). The 4-H youth development program offers youth life experiences, opportunities, future career plans, and life skills after hours that enable them to meet their full potential.

4-H youth development programs utilize structured activities as a way to develop leadership, citizenship, and critical life skills (Haas, Mincemoyer, & Perkins, 2015). These programs are delivered through school enrichment, clubs, camps, short-term/special interest enrichment groups (Gregoire, 2004; Hedrick, Homan, & Dick,
In addition, after-school youth development or enrichment programs are offered (i.e., environmental, citizenship, leadership) (Downey et al., 2014). Four-H involvement happens during out of school time and many youth participate to improve their academic performance and gain important life skills for their future (Downey et al., 2014). Research has shown the impacts of youth participation in 4-H after-school programs (Gupta, Grant, & Strauss, 2012; Heck et al., 2012; Paisley & Ferrari, 2005; Wallace & Freitas, 2016). Minority youth involvement in 4-H has been found to be meaningful and educational, and offers the opportunity to be in the presence of caring adults (Serido, Borden, & Wiggs, 2014). This involvement is also present in other agricultural-related programs such as FFA, urban gardening, and arts. A study by Alston and Crutchfield (2009) mentioned that 4-H agricultural programs do not meet the needs of the increasing minority population and retention strategies should be increased to recruit more youth into 4-H programming. The involvement in urban areas is far different in rural areas towards participating in 4-H. Inner city youth gear their perceptions on engineering, education, and horticulture fields greater than youth in rural areas participating in agricultural areas and environmental backgrounds (Alston & Crutchfield, 2009).

Agricultural-related programs can have a big impact on youth exploring new fields and learning new skills, however does these programs interest the minority and urban population? African American youth particularly teen males’ participation has been limited due to many factors and issues. Could these issues include socio-economic status, agricultural-related interest, or even program content and structure?

In 2004, the estimated population of African-American males between the ages of 15 and 29 living in the United States was at 4.5 million—less than 8% of this
population had completed post-secondary school (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006). As a result, Black males are less likely to graduate from college than their White and Asian counterparts (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006). In addition to educational downfalls, African-American young men find themselves enmeshed in the criminal justice system three times more often than Hispanic men and seven times more than White young men (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006). Almost two-thirds of African American males who did not graduate from college are unemployed and more than 50% of these young men end up in prison (Banks, 2014). The disparity among young Black males and the lack of parental or educational interventions have been associated with increased violent behavior among this population (Banks, 2014). Consequently, society has often correlated uniformity in this behavior across the urban African-American young male population (Banks, 2014).

A number of researchers (Alston & Crutchfield, 2009; Cano & Bankston, 1992; Russell & Heck, 2008; Schinker, 2010; Weikert et al., 2014) have explored factors associated with participation and non-participation of minority youth in 4-H youth development programs. Several important findings related to access, barriers, and parental involvement were found to be relevant factors in participation levels for this population. Noted as a salient issue and serving as the basis of the findings were perceptions and factors leading to participation. Many of the studies noted factors perceived by ethnic minority youth as positive influences; and influences perceived by the parents of minority youth as barriers to their children’s participation. Youth who live in low-income areas are limited by a lack of family resources as well as limited numbers of programs offered in their communities (Mahoney et al., 2005).
Statement of the Problem

Green and Haines (2012) discussed the dire situation of young males living in urban locales, where about half of young minority males do not complete high school. In addition, crime and violence have increased during after-school hours. The lack of opportunities and resources in urban areas cause many young African American males to face limited opportunities for engagement in positive youth development. Hill (2008) also has pointed to the lack of involvement by young African American males in extracurricular and after-school programs in the broader context of education and development. In particular, research has shown (see, e.g., Fuller et al., 2013) that they have a limited presence in after-school programs designed to provide academic, mentoring, and other support. The 4-H youth development program empowers youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults (National 4-H Council, 2015) to develop skills, competencies, and knowledge, and reduce risk-related factors. Programs in science, citizenship, healthy living, and mentoring are offered to youth in various settings such as clubs, camps, in-school and even after-school programs. But the question remains, why is there a lack of participation among high school African American males in 4-H programs?

Significance of the Study

Building skills for youth to be successful in their life and within the community is classified as Positive Youth Development (PYD). The opportunity to gain skills from making great decisions or problem solving can help youth in positive and supporting environments. In today’s society, many youth lack of opportunities and resources in rural and urban areas, and male youth are faced with limited development opportunities.
O’Toole (2003) explained that when young people in rural and urban areas lack jobs and social supports, they often are left behind and may engage in risky behavior. In these urban areas, socio-economic or living status, parental involvement, feelings of efficacy, the need to be valued by society, and self-esteem are influential factors in youth participation in community youth and/or agricultural-related programs (Brennan, Barnett & Baugh, 2007).

In previous years, 4-H participation in Pennsylvania among African American males has been limited. For example, 4-H enrollment in 2011–2012 among African-American was at 14.76%, while for Hispanics/Latinos it was 45.0% (Pennsylvania 4-H, 2011). In the following year, 2012–2013, enrollment numbers dropped to 14.20% for African Americans and 9.49% Hispanics/Latinos youth (Pennsylvania 4-H, 2012). In 2013–2014, African American population enrollment declined to 13.91% while 11.09% of Hispanics/Latinos youth were reached (Pennsylvania 4-H, 2013). Based on data from the Penn State Extension 4-H State office, there has been a significant decline in enrollment by minority youth in Pennsylvania. However, little research has been done to determine the reasons for these declines in enrollment rates and participation in 4-H programming by minority populations.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate ethnic identity development, community involvement, and experiences of African American high school males and how these influences their participation in agricultural-related youth programs. The research was grounded in three specific research questions:
1. How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males self-identify as measured by the (revised) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R)?
   a. What similarities emerge from young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs activity compared to non-involved Black males?
   b. What differences emerge from young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs activity compared to non-involved Black males?

2. How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males perceive community involvement as measured by the Community involvement questionnaire?
   a. What is the quality of life of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?
   b. What is the perception of community involvement of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?
   c. What is the knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?
   d. How do young Black males involved in agriculture-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males perceived the importance and participation in community involvement?
3. How do the experiences of high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs differ from those of non-involved Black males within similar urban communities?
   a. How do agricultural-related Black male youth and non-agricultural-related young Black youth feel about the agriculture-related youth development programs?
   b. What do young black males know about agricultural-related programs?
   c. What themes and opinions can be identified about young Black males’ perception on agricultural-related programs?

**Hypothesis**

**Quantitative Hypothesis**

1. There is no relationship between Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males’ self-identity as measured by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure revised (MEIM-R).
2. There is a significant difference between Black young males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black young males’ perception of community involvement.
3. There is a significant difference between Black young males who are involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black young males’ leadership, life skills, and community involvement experiences.

**Qualitative Hypothesis**

The anticipated findings may show that African American young males view 4-H programs to be beneficial but not tailored for minority audiences. The effect of volunteers and adult mentoring will play a major role in youth participation in
programs offered. In addition, gaining access to 4-H after-school programs may be a barrier to participation due to other internal and sometimes external problematic issues that contribute to a lack of involvement. These could include transportation, lack of interest, after-school activities and sports, school enrichment or tutoring programs, or even family issues.

Another theme that could arise from the findings is youth’s lack of knowledge of 4-H programming or leadership development skills. Further, a lack of interest in agricultural-related programs could limit youth participation. Factors in attracting youth could include the presence of older 4-H alumni and members in after-school programs; the impact of and outlets for community service learning events; parental values and benefits of 4-H; popularity of and access to programs; and accessible locations which facilitate program participation.

**Key Terms**

*4-H Youth Development Program* – a voluntary educational program that supplements formal school education, and provides real-life experiences and an opportunity for youth to plan their own learning with parents and other adults (Seevers et al., 1997, p. 78).

*Youth involvement* – meaningful and sustained participation outside of normal activities in school or home activities in which youth are either involved or not involved. The involvement of youth is classified as an asset-based approach in which youth are distinguished as community resources rather than potential problems utilizing skill development, building social capital, and giving back to the community through service (Rose-Krasnor, 2009).
*Young Black male* – are defined as self-identified Black individuals who are male in
gender and are between the ages of 18-29 years (Moore, Adedoyin, Robinson, &
Boamah, 2015). The Black male is also described from the historical roots in slavery and
age-old racism used for racial classification of men who are frequently labeled as
problematic and prone to violence. (Howard & Noguera, 2014, pp. 30–31). Young Black
males also experience challenges of rates of incarceration, school failure, poverty, and
negative stereotypes (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006).

*After-school programs* – programs that involve school-aged youth ages 5–18 that
emphasize academic and non-academic activities. These programs meet expectations of
working parents who want enrichment for their child during after school times (typically
2:30pm-5:30pm). After-school programs can provide transportation, social and life skills,
safe spaces, education and mentoring, good citizenship, recreational activities, and
increased adult-to-child ratios. Some examples of after-school programs include Boys
and Girls Clubs, Scouts, YMCA, and 4-H (Fashola, 2002, p. 7).

*Qualitative research* – a research approach that allows an examination of people’s
experiences in detail by using a specific set of exploratory research methods such as in-
depth interviews, focus groups, observations, content analysis, visual methods, and life
histories. Qualitative methods are used to gain an in-depth understanding of behaviors,
beliefs, emotions, and opinions from perspectives of participants in a study (Hennink,

*Quantitative research* - is a way to test objective theories by exploring the relationship
among variables. Variables can be measured utilizing instruments and then analyzed
Ethnic identity – the subset of identity categories that are suitable for affiliation as determined by descent-based characteristics. These characteristics may include physical features or even cultural and historical inheritance (Chandra, 2006).

Life Skills - Competencies or abilities that assist individuals to help them learn to become successful within environments in which they live (Fox, Schroder & Lodi, 2003).

Agricultural-related youth programs – formal and non-formal programs tailored for youth on agricultural education instruction, natural resources, and related topics in-school or after-school such as: agricultural leadership, urban gardening/horticulture, nutrition, agri-science, and/or STEM-related clubs or programs that provide youth with healthy living, learning, literacy, leadership, professional development, life skills, and citizenship opportunities (Phipps, 2008).

FFA- an agricultural education youth leadership program in-school and after-school that focuses on student leadership and career development with high school and middle school chapters across the country (Phipps, 2008).

Limitations

Study limitations included the following:

1. The sample was limited to three urban areas in Pennsylvania and African American young males and therefore was not generalizable to other areas based on populations of African American and minority population of males in the state.

2. After piloting the open-ended semi structured questions, changes were made to their structure based on participants’ non-responses.

3. The research method was useful in gaining a detailed understanding of the subject, but not a broad understanding.
Role of the Researcher

My interest in 4-H youth development and agricultural education involves perspectives relating to the subject. First, throughout my career I have always been involved in agricultural-related programs and leadership in order to continue learning more about youth in various areas and their interests. I started my career evaluating 1890 land-grant extension programs and working with all audiences, including youth ages 5-18. That career opportunity allowed me to gain valuable experiences in observing and assisting Cooperative Extension staff and specialists with various extension programming while meeting the needs of the community.

That experience opened more doors, and led me to work toward a master’s program at Virginia Tech in Agricultural and Extension Education. The program gave me additional experience working with African American audiences around Virginia in farming and 4-H youth development. I had the opportunity to continue helping the National Society of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and related Sciences (MANRRS) in working with young JR MANRRS high school students and undergraduate students who reside in low socio-economic areas that have limited resources.

Once my degree was completed I accepted a position as a 4-H youth development educator in Virginia. This experience led me to work harder to bring in programs needed in the county in which I worked. My leadership and community involvement experience as a student showed me the professional I wished to become. I worked to continue developing programs for youth in rural and urban areas that had socioeconomic challenges and limited resources. My 4-H programs included leadership development,
environmental education, character building, and service learning. Through these programs I found myself gaining more interest, but not enough.

I wanted to target more males but particularly young African American males in positive experiences outside of the classroom. I often wondered whether they were involved in sports or work, and whether one or both of these reasons were responsible for their low participation in my programs. Could it be the programs itself? Could it be the lack of parent involvement or of understanding the learning objectives and promotion of the programs?

I then realized that building up our youth in the fields of agriculture, community development and service would be my passion. My role as a researcher is to continue to develop programming that meets the needs of the community and the interests of youth. If I can make this happen, I am positive that more involvement will mean a lower dropout rate, increased knowledge and attitudes, and even an improved quality of life among African American males in urban areas.
Chapter 2

Brief Review of the Literature

Agricultural-related youth programs provide a chance for young people to be involved in education-based programs available to all ethnicities and religious backgrounds. The program also allows youth to work with others their age, engage in adult-youth partnerships, set future goals, and participate in civic community engagement activities. However, there has been limited involvement by African American males in after-school programs. 4-H and other agricultural-related youth programs have struggled with this issue of lack of participation and involvement, as well as with complex problems around the social inclusion and education of African American male youth.

This chapter has three sections. The first section offers a discussion of Black male youth in urban communities, highlighting inclusion, ethnic identity, educational attainment, and after-school and community involvement. The second section looks at agricultural-related youth programs and influential factors in participation. The final section presents the theoretical context of the study, based on Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of Human Development, the Ecodevelopmental Theory, the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, and a conceptual framework and model for understanding the strengths of Black youth.

Section 1: Black Male Youth in Urban Communities

Black male youth in urban communities seek to gain positive exposure and support for their future success. The African American communities in urban areas offer
various cultural avenues for the success of young Black males. Some of these cultural strengths within urban communities include families, kinship bonds, achievement orientation, and even churches (Hill, 1997). Other racial groups have the same strengths within their communities; however, African Americans still face the historical context of slavery and racism today (Hill, 1997). Stewart (2000) noted that within the category of academic achievement, parent and youth aspirations, racial identity, and Black colleges aid the strengths and positive outcomes of African Americans in urban communities. Another positive component in Black urban communities is the strong and flexible role of the single-parent mother (Hill, 1997). Some studies have shown that more Black youth in single-parent families attend college that those from two-parent families (Barajas, 2011; Brown, 2005). Black colleges give significant support to Black urban communities. According to Hill (1997), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs) offer many forms of assistance in order to increase the economic self-sufficiency of communities and give youth an opportunity to engage in a quality education. Hembree, Costa, Glaude, Akbar and Hale (2013) pointed to the HBCUs’ role in preparing teachers to work with culturally diverse communities with limited-resources.

The Black church also continues to exert an impact in urban communities. Moore, Adedoyin, Robinson and Boamah (2015) mentioned that the Black church serves as a positive vehicle for change and makes up the heart of Black Christians. The Black church also serves as a place to express religious practice; to address social inequality; to engage in a functional family outlook; to be a place for political action awareness, and to offer members an opportunity to release emotional stress from daily activity due to their presence in a society that is not always welcoming of race and ethnicity (Moore,
Black social clubs also offer support for youth and families in urban communities. These clubs offer racial and sexual segregation, balancing socioeconomic opportunities, and even increasing social networks (Marsh, Chaney & Jones, 2012).

Urban Black communities offer many resources and supports for Black youth. Black youth are also given positive contributions towards their communities than the norm of violence or even substance abuse. A study by Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek and DeSilva (2008) noted a new framework for understanding the positive contributions of Black youth. Those strengths involving cultural resources, religion, and family are essential to Black youth.

It is apparent that young Black males in urban areas have the capacity and support to thrive to meet their full potential. However, many young Black males in urban cities and communities experience challenges and pressures similar to those present for youth in their adolescent years. Youth in high-risk urban communities face additional challenges, including exposure to violence, lack of resources, and even poverty (Yarmuth et al., 2012). Briggs et al. (2012) defined youth in high-risk urban communities as boys and girls aged 11–14, of any race or ethnicity, who live in urban areas that fall within the 50th percentile for violent crimes, and are in the lowest 50th percentile for median household income. In this study, the term urban is defined as follows:

“Densely settled” territories that consist of “core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile” and surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile.” The “urban” also has a symbolic resonance, often (and often
negatively) associated with the lives and experiences of working-class African Americans (Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 24).

Many African Americans reside in urban communities and cities where high percentages of youth live in a household with a single mother or where neither parent is present (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). In addition, the resources in these urban Black communities are scarce and poverty is prevalent within the households. Belgrave and Brevard (2015) stated that family and household structures have a significant effect on the life-outcomes and well-being of African American males. Family arrangements are one of the greatest predictors of differences in urban violence within African American communities (Williams et al., 2000). Higher rates of family struggles produce higher rates of violence and crime in urban Black communities (Williams et al., 2000). Belgrave and Brevard (2015) mentioned that many families in limited resource areas often suffer to survive deprived neighborhoods and school districts. Throughout these socioeconomic issues, the health of many youth and families is another important concern that could limit involvement or participation in educational programming. How can families and youth take part in extension programs after school in areas deprived of resources, and that have limiting factors for growth? Belgrave and Brevard (2015) reported that African American males experience lack of family support, single-parent households, and societal factors of discrimination and racism.

Challenges urban young Black males face often result in unfavorable health outcomes. For example, research shows that puberty starts earlier for African American young males than for other young males in other ethnic groups (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). Early onset puberty does not just change youth on the outside, but can shift
behavior in the child's social environment (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). This period is known to be critical because young Black males begin to steer away from family, become consumed with friends, and lose interest in school (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). Other health factors affecting male youth in urban African American communities include having asthma, being exposed to sexual transmitted diseases/HIV, and being at risk of suicide (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015).

Racial discrimination is another component that plagues the livelihood of the young African American male. Neblett et al. (2009) stated that from a psychological perspective, racial discrimination can cause youth to be helpless to stereotypical threats. A stereotype-threat is viewed as individuals being exposed to negative discussion on being a young Black male in America and a negative risk to one’s group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). These threats are caused from students who lack the inability to perform through academic settings (Downey, Eccles, & Chatman, 2005). Students with goal-oriented characteristics are more likely to achieve based on their performance and not be classified in the stereotype threat function (Downey, Eccles, & Chatman, 2005). African American youth would not want to associate themselves with surroundings or environments in which they felt devalued (Neblett et al., 2009). Research has shown that African American young males experience racial discrimination within their communities, after school, and in-school due to low engagement in class participation, poor grades, and peer pressure, which can cause violent activity in this group (Caldwell et al., 2004; Neblett et al., 2009). Belgrave and Brevard (2015) stated that perceived racism is associated with a higher number of environmental risks such as violence, sexual abuse, and even drug use. Young Black males also deal with the consequences of substance use,
which could include social, criminal justice, and even educational problems (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015).

**Factors Limiting Inclusion among African American Male Youth**

McMahon, Keys, Berardi, Crouch, and Coker (2016) stated that social inclusion is used in many practices and focuses on importance and value. Social inclusion is defined as a multidimensional idea that contains various practices involving academic inclusion, assessment and planning, social inclusion, and even organizational inclusion (McMahon et al., 2016). First, academic inclusion focuses on school instruction and relevance to students’ needs. Second, assessment and planning explain the importance of teacher development and awareness of student needs (McMahon et al., 2016). Are teachers in the school system making an effort to provide more inclusive experiences for Black male youth? Bonner (2014) noted that many educators have difficulties creating effective instructional strategies for young Black males. Third, social inclusion points to the extent to which young Black males are involved in after-school and in-school activities that can increase social engagement (McMahon et al., 2016). Lastly, organizational inclusion is referred to as the frequency of communicating and structural values in which students can give voice and become more inclusive in their environment and school. Although young Black males are trying to maintain an inclusive environment to be able to have a voice and become socially involved with others, there are still limiting factors. How can we change and increase young Black men’s social supports and peer networks? McMahon et al. (2016) indicated that developing a sense of belonging and satisfaction in school can help academic and social outcomes among young Black males. The study by McMahon et al. (2016) focused on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model exploring the social settings
at various levels that influence student outcomes. Academic achievement could be a variable in the limited participation of young Black men based on their educational experiences in-school. In today's society, African American boys are faced with additional challenges in meeting their full potential and developing into young men. Zamani-Gallaher and Polite (2010) reported that Black male youth are affected by high school dropout, crime and incarceration, poor access to higher education, gender identity, and overrepresentation in special education. These economic and social variables offer a negative profile of the young Black male. In 2004, the estimated population of African-American males between the ages of 15 and 29 living in the United States was approximately 4.5 million. Less than 8% of this population had graduated from college (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006). As a result, Black males are less likely to graduate from college than their White and Asian counterparts (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006).

Furthermore, African-American young men make up a significant population in the criminal justice system, where their population is three times greater than that of Hispanic men and seven times greater than that of White young men (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006). Almost 66% of African American males who did not graduate from college are unemployed and more than 50% end up in prison (Banks, 2014). This disparity and the lack of parental or educational interventions have been associated with increased violent behavior in this population. Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013), stated that Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model can be used to explore family and parental factors and influences of youth towards them. Consequently, society has often characterized this behavior as uniform across the entire urban African-American young
male population (Banks, 2014). Recent literature has identified the young Black male as a threat to society (Colvin, 1991; Love, 2014; Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010). Stereotypes of urban young Black males and their mistreatment by educational and criminal justice systems continue to result in negative experiences (Givens, Nasir, Ross, & McKinney de Royston, 2016). The terms used to describe the young Black male include “at risk”, “in crisis”, or even “left behind” (Howard & Noguera, 2014). Understanding the Black male and the struggles of these men is essential to their success in society.

The Black Male and Manhood

In a study by Hunter and Davis (1992), manhood was viewed as self-determined and incorporating accountability, serving a lead family role, and having a spiritual philosophy. Some meanings of manhood included men having ownership, status in their occupation, and spiritual leadership and growth. But are these manhood qualities required to become a Black man? How do we define a Black male?

According to Howard (2014), there are five ways to define a Black male: (1) the physical brute or anti-intellectual, which includes having physical and intellectual strength; (2) the lazy Black male, which has a historical context—that is, as a slave whose physical labor was not efficient; (3) the hypersexual Black male, which is the male who cannot control his sexual desires; (4) the criminal-minded Black male, whose negative image is due to being blamed for violent activity and accused of crimes based on their race; and (5) the slickster or pimp, who finds his way around the law and is a skilled criminal (Howard, 2014).
The African American culture and population also are understood to be labeled as “wild” or “freaky” in focusing on movies, dance, and even sports (Hill, 2004). Society often views African Americans as a type of animals better known as “dogs” even from a street sense of rappers bring named Snoop Doggy or even Little Bow Wow (Hill, 2004). Gender also plays a role on young Black males through social class and violence. Hill (2004) states young Black males harm each other and it reflects their age and even social economic status. Do African American young Black males accept the image placed on their gender and race currently society today?

Understanding how African American males experience masculinity and themselves within their communities could offer more insight into their development. Davis (2006) discussed masculinity in terms of social and cultural meanings to being a man. Belgrave and Brevard (2015) mentioned masculinity meanings, including being the household provider or a man who requires much attention from women. Another study characterized masculinity as being financially stable, having money, and being tough (Kerrigan et al., 2007). In light of these requirements for manhood or masculinity, young Black males could be perceived as non-existent in youth programs and needing to gain positive experiences. Continued involvement of Black adult males in community programs for youth is essential to learning to develop necessary skills as they grow into adulthood. Kafele (2009) cited the absence of positive Black male role models in young Black male lives as a distraction. This could lead males to find meaning in street activity, television, and fulgor music. Educating young Black males about cultural history and important accomplishments of other Black men can serve to increase involvement rather than following the traditional sports and entertainment concept (Kafele, 2009). Harris
(2014) states sports is a critical piece to young Black males’ livelihood. However, the sports component is often difficult to maximize in a positive manner from the potential of Black male youth not gaining life and social skills needed (Harris, 2014).

In addition, traditional masculine power for Black males has not been granted (Lee, 1992). Social, economic, and cultural factors have influenced the ways in which Black males accept masculine roles. Black males have continued to be denied the possibilities of manhood, leading to struggles with oppression and racism (Lee, 1992). The barriers to achievement and the expression of manhood are strong indicators that the Black male was socially disadvantaged. In a society that has not granted Black males the opportunity to engage in manhood, achieving psychosocial development is often difficult.

Belgrave and Brevard (2015) indicated that young Black males achieving manhood can struggle with racial discrimination. The opportunity to obtain a strong racial and ethnic identity can alleviate stress and discrimination, and increase academic viewpoints among young Black males (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015).

**Ethnic Identity**

Hutchinson et al. (1996) indicated that ethnic identity includes symbols and meanings that point to unique traits or stereotypes in young Black male environments. According to Lee (1992), many young Black males who are born in urban areas are surrounded by poverty and crime. Often, they are nurtured in negative environments, which cause a lack of trust and independence from others in the community, such as teachers, mentors, civic leaders, and even family members. Do these negative factors and environmental struggles justify the certain cultural identity of the young Black male? Young Black males often join certain groups to “be cool” or fit in areas of strong peer
pressure to fit in and belong or gain a certain type of social identity. In addition, the types of adults who surround these young Black males in these environments can be negative role-models.

Educators’ and leaders’ lack of training in culturally responsive teaching directly impacts the state of the young Black male. It is important for educators working with young Black men to understand how their identity is defined (Howard, 2014). Many young African American male students experience frustration with the learning process, and believe the system to be non-supportive and riddled with what they view as social disappointments. They also find themselves navigating the process of manhood without a father or positive male role model. According to social identity theory, individuals know that they belong to a certain social group that has emotional value and significance (McKeown, Haji, & Ferguson, 2016). Examining young Black males’ social identities could determine their potential level of importance in a social group and opportunity for inclusion and attachment (Rogers, Scott, & Way, 2015).

If young Black men are not exposed to a nurturing environment within the home, they often internalize these experiences and find little value in their achievements, such as a college education or being successful in school. Those students who have contact with positive role models and teachers enjoy achievement and future success. According to Howard (2014), high-achieving Black young men display persistence and determination to overcome negative labels.

**Racial Identity**

Racial identity is an important factor in understanding young Black males. Belgrave and Brevard (2015) mentioned that racial identity is how one looks at and
personally identifies/connects with a specific racial group. Displaying strong racial group ties encompasses greater involvement among young African American males and supports their development both socially and academically. Racial socialization is also apparent in racial and ethnic identity. Parental advice and teachings on race to African American males also could affect their decision to associate or even socialize with other ethnic groups. Belgrave and Brevard (2015) believed that the messages offered from parents to youth may influence their identity ethnically and racially. Do we wonder why are there differences in the cultural and environmental conditions of African Americans compared to White Americans? Hutchinson (1997) argued that:

The culture of poverty perspective argues that social disorganization, poverty, and inadequate socialization of children are the primary reasons for the high rates of social problems (p. 140)

This perspective can be derived from the traditions and cultural values that cause troubled behavior among African American males (Hutchinson, 1997). In addition, the socio-economic levels and localities of areas can play a major role in the occurrence of negative problems. Crime and the hip-hop culture also offer challenges to urban communities (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010). An example of how culture can dictate the identity of young Black men is through rap and hip-hop music. Hip-hop and gangster rap evolved within the urban scenery in the late 1970s and 1980s as a post-civil rights phenomenon (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010). This music culture presented the platform for expressing beliefs and opinions in the aftermath of civil rights and urban inefficiency.
Although Black males were able to express themselves through this music culture, they were often viewed as threats to society due to the vulgar and culturally biased opinions regarding race, class, and gender used in the music (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010). The music represented a sense of belonging for young Black males and provided sources of self-esteem through sayings such as “its cool” or “the thing to do.” Williams et al. (2014) stated that theoretical models of ethnic identity balance with social identity theory to offer insights into minority youth. Given the conditions, social and cultural identities, and poor environments of young African American males, could racism be present in positive youth development (PYD) programming, serving to limit their potential and development? Are the lifestyles, environments, and education level of Black male youth a factor in their voice on PYD? Understanding ethnic identity formation among African American males and their search for belonging or attitudes on group membership could give educators and practitioners deeper insight and offer perspectives on implementing inclusive and positive spaces for these youths.

**Educational Attainment, Achievement, and STEM**

In today’s society, Black males are faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from social acceptance, limited school resources, and understanding to educational attainment and achievement. Some challenges in addressing school achievement gaps among young Black males include: rigor of school curricula; teacher quality and preparation; experience of teachers and class size; safety in school; low birthweight; lead poisoning; nutrition and hunger; participation by parents or guardians in school-related and after-school related activities; parent availability for involvement due to job placement and other factors; more reading at a younger age with parents and youth; and
too much television watching (Zamani Gallaher & Polite, 2010). Through challenges that face young African American males in achievement and educational attainment, many young Black males are often viewed as “cultural misfits” in schools they attend or in which they are currently enrolled (Zamani Gallaher & Polite, 2010). Why is this so? Why are school systems fueling stereotype-related anxieties among young Black males?

In addition, school resources are limited in urban areas, and teachers are sometimes uncommitted and not qualified (Zamani Gallaher & Polite, 2010). These stereotype threats are classified as stress stemming from perceptions of students as unwilling to meet certain standards (Zamani Gallaher & Polite, 2010). Lee (1992) noted that frustration, underachievement and ultimate failure often characterize the educational scope of young Black males. Black males are more likely to be placed in vocational and special education programs than other ethnic groups (Lee, 1992). African Americans experience higher rates of problems in school due to higher dropout rates, suspensions, health issues, and gender identities. Research has also determined that some African American males are placed in educational tracks that differ from those available to other students, such as special education programs based on behaviors of withdrawal or causing unnecessary actions (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010).

Unfortunately, these particular environments define young Black males as special needs who require special attention. Additional limitations discourage Black students from involvement in certain gifted and advanced programs. These factors or barriers could include peer influences; childrearing practices; disengagement due to lack of interest in programs; feelings of loneliness and even fear of acceptance within gifted and advanced style programs; media images of young Black males; and even negative school
experiences—all of these could hamper young Black male’s motivation to be involved in such programs (Hargrove & Seay, 2011). Encouraging leadership potential and academic encouragement among these young Black males through steady mentoring could assist with these challenges. Research has shown that minority youth are placed in multicultural learning environments to give them an opportunity to address social and academic needs (Kendricks & Arment, 2011). Among challenges faced by young Black males, other opportunities continue to be available for them in certain fields, including STEM.

**Factors limiting African American Youth to STEM**

Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and even agriculture are subjects and majors in which many students have continued interest for their future. However, there has been a lack of involvement among minority youth, particularly young Black males in STEM fields. An interesting fact about STEM fields is that more minority audiences are non-involved and/or not represented in STEM fields. Drew (2011) indicated that STEM education could have many barriers, from students being not interested in or being frightened by advanced levels of math and science, to recommendations from teachers or peers not to participate. Another reason for the decline in participation by minority youth and young Black males’ lack of involvement in STEM programs is misunderstanding and lack of familiarity with the science-related language among these STEM fields which can hinder the achievement gap (Drew, 2011). Specific ways in which teachers confronted barriers for urban minority youth were to establish collaborative learning environments in making urban youth feel a part of the lessons and instruction on STEM (Drew, 2011). Other research has noted the need
for STEM participation by and the lack of involvement among urban minority youth, citing not a lack of interest in STEM but the lack of skills needed to be successful in STEM fields and majors (Salto, Riggs, Leon, Casiano, & Leon, 2014). The national 4-H youth development organization focuses on other initiatives but more importantly STEM. National 4-H Council (2017) indicated that 4-H is a mission mandate and is set to prepare youth for the challenges of the 21st century. The 4-H STEM programs areas are focused on environmental science and alternative energy, engineering and technology, and plant and animal science. According to the National 4-H Council (2017), 4-H’s hands on learning programs can attract youth to STEM via three different components. First, specific 4-H STEM programs can offer growth interest in STEM-related future jobs and careers; second, 4-H STEM can create STEM leadership opportunities to build confidence in youth in participation among active 4-H youth; and third, 4-H STEM creates a fun atmosphere for youth beyond in-school programming (National 4-H Council, 2017).

Dillivan and Dillivan (2014) noted that 4-H programs play a major role in youth development; non-formal instruction is an effective way for youth to explore STEM through various experiential learning activities. Chittum, Jones, Akalin, and Schram (2017) explored the effects of an after-school STEM program on student’s motivation and engagement and found that students who participate in STEM youth programs have different views on future and college plans compared to students who do not participate. Programs that are student-centered and offer a youth voice in the type of programming were effective in interesting in the program (Chittum, Jones, Akalin, & Schram, 2017). Based on innovative and adapted programs tailored for all youth and especially for
minority youth in urban settings, why do young Black males still lack interest in STEM and/or agricultural-related youth programs?

Many of today’s jobs are beginning to focus on technological advances that drive schools, business, and governments (Boscia, 2013). The majority of jobs created in the future were in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)-related fields (Boscia, 2013). According to Boscia (2013), about 25% of the U.S. workforce is composed of women. Of that 25%, about 2.5% of jobs are held by minorities. African Americans represent a small proportion of students enrolled in engineering programs (Strayhorn, 2015). According to Foltz, Gannon, and Kirschmann (2014), interest in STEM fields is introduced to youth at an early age by parents. Young people also lack role models and leaders in their community to recruit them into STEM fields (Boscia, 2013). Zamani-Gallaher and Polite (2010) indicated that African American males find science to be very strange and even foreign. If STEM is introduced earlier in young Black males’ life through frequent preparation and experiences, interest will continue to arise in coursework and even after-school. Mathematics and science should be incorporated and relevant to the student’s everyday life and taught in a non-traditional way meeting the needs and interests of the students in these urban areas (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010). Incorporating music and art, literature about children similar to young Black males, sports, games, and historical Black figures can assist in connecting school and home culture with STEM field interest (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010).

A study by Wang and Billington (2016) mentioned minority disadvantage youth lacked opportunities and interest in STEM based on little STEM after-school programs
and understanding of STEM future careers. In addition, the importance of education is essential and a degree in a STEM field could provide further opportunities and jobs for urban youth. High school academic preparation is often limited and essential to the development and success of youth. Most school systems lack additional support and recruitment of Black males, limiting knowledge, advanced placement (AP), college preparation, and engagement in STEM disciplines (Foltz, Gannon, & Kirschmann 2014). The decline in STEM enrollment is due to many factors, such as: preparation in subject matter, lack of resources and services, and negative community and home environments. Strayhorn (2015) stated that the national goal is to increase college production in STEM fields and include more diverse students in STEM-related careers. Recent data show most of these degrees are earned by White Americans (66%) compared to African Americans (8%) (Strayhorn, 2015). About 65% of White Americans received undergraduate degrees in STEM fields, while African Americans received 9.2% of undergraduate degrees in STEM fields (Strayhorn, 2015). A study by Maple and Stage (1991) examined young Black males high school males’ reasons for STEM field decisions. Findings indicated that attitudes towards math, confidence, past learning experiences in STEM, and parental understanding of STEM played a significant role in their decision to pursue these fields (Maple & Stage, 1991).

Given the challenges in enrollment, perceptions of agricultural-related programs focusing on STEM is also a crucial factor to consider among young Black high school age males. The question is this: Can 4-H after-school STEM programming efforts meet the needs of African American young males? The connection to STEM fields and 4-H after-school programs could increase Black males’ confidence, interest in science and
math, and attainment of future careers. Sparking interest and providing hands-on learning experiences to Black males could improve student achievement and widen educational experiences (PR Newswire, 2010). Other ways to promote more interest and student achievement is motivating young Black males to learn in classes of interest and be accepted by their peers (Kafele, 2009). If young Black males in high school are actively involved in structured and hands-on experiences within STEM and agricultural-related programs the turnaround towards achievement could increase. This can be a major factor in young Black males’ participation in math and science classes. Toldson and Lemmons (2011) reviewed African American paths to STEM fields and showed that academic self-concept and career self-efficacy demonstrate young African American males’ improvement on academic and social outcomes.

A workshop report by the Quality Education for Minorities Network (2010) cited factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American males in STEM. Some of the factors include: lack of STEM exposure at an early age; positive role models and mentors in the STEM field; lack of advanced math and science skills or nerves about taking math; peer pressure; students having to take classes again; students thoughts and beliefs about scientists and various other stereotypes; financial needs in certain communities and schools; and even a decrease in teachers’ expectations in school systems (Quality Education for Minorities Network, 2010). Also affecting participation in STEM fields and programs is poverty, which is the leading reason for low academic performance among young Black males. Other issues include poor health care, bad nutrition, parents with little education, and low social service support—all of these add to the negative outlook of the Black young male. African American
males affected by stereotypes exhibit poor task performance in school and have limited success in STEM subjects (Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010). Obstacles that continue to be limiting factors contributing to the lack of participation and interest in STEM in the classroom can also revolve around after-school programming and involvement in young Black male urban settings. Family motivation and peer interest also plays a major role in young Black males participating in STEM or agricultural-related programs (Wang & Billington, 2016).

**After-school, Extracurricular, and Community Involvement**

Positive Youth Development (PYD) focuses on building skills that youth need to be successful, contributing members of society and their community. In environments with structure and support, youth can gain opportunities to engage in skills that include problem-solving and decision-making. After-school and extracurricular activities can be an asset in youth’s engaged learning and social skills. Extracurricular activities are important for youth living in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, where many face negative circumstances and struggle to succeed (Eisman et al, 2016). Clubs, sports, arts and community-based programs for youth are offered, including the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, and FFA programs. These particular programs involve youth and seek to make them active participants within their communities.

Community involvement is defined as the steps that different organizations and people take to market the development of students (Nettles, 1991). Community involvement can also be classified according to different processes. These processes focus on *conversion, mobilization, allocation of resources, and instruction* (Nettles, 1991). *Conversion* causes the student to change a behavior (Nettles, 1991). *Mobilization*
includes ways to enhance organizational and citizen participation in the educational process (Nettles, 1991). Allocation is activities within the community that can offer added resources to the development of youth (Nettles, 1991). Instruction helps youth with their intellectual development and understanding of values within a community (Nettles, 1991). In terms of youth development and community involvement, instruction would be the best process. Instruction within communities can take place in organized locations such as clubs, youth groups, or even teams. Community involvement in clubs and youth programs serves as a way to educate and enhance student interest and abilities in-school and after-school (Nettles, 1991).

Being involved in the community is a great way for youth, specifically urban youth, to gain a sense of responsibility and create change within their local environments. A study by Baldridge, Hill, and Davis (2011) examined young Black males and their involvement in a community-based educational program. The findings indicated that work experience and healthy adult-youth relationships through the community-based program were important to the success of the young Black males (Baldridge, Hill, & Davis, 2011). EmpowerYouth, is a national community-based organization that is tailored to support the academic achievement, personal development, and civic involvement among young Black males (Baldridge, Hill, & Davis, 2011). So why should community-based and/or after-school based programs be important for young Black males? Historically, the New Deal played a major role on minority and low-income youth in urban settings to gain opportunities in gaining employment (Baldridge, Hill, & Davis, 2011). Many opportunities came from programs tailored to provide experiences and skills for youth to be successful in gaining a job (Baldridge, Hill, & Davis, 2011).
These particular community-based youth programs offered are prepared to address the needs of the community and needs of young Black males to provide more educational and social experiences for growth and development (Baldridge, Hill, & Davis, 2011).

Fredricks and Eccles (2008) stated that according to the ecological theory, youth have unique opportunities to experience development in different contexts. By participating in community and extracurricular activities, youth can engage in positive development. Participation in after-school activities are important in the early teenage years, which is a time when youth are beginning to make their own decisions about time spent after-school, receiving emotional support from mentors and other adults, establishing relationships with other youth, and searching for their identity (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008). Their patterns of relationships could be based on different types of after-school activities. Participating in school-based clubs and organizations allows youth to have the opportunity to gain leadership and academic skills (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008). Youth involvement in sports activities provides positive experiences in which problem-solving skills, emotional development, a sense of belonging, and identity development can be enhanced and appreciated (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003).

Fredricks and Eccles (2006) indicated that participation in high school activities after-school increases the likelihood of attending college, improves health, and increases participation in community service. Fredricks and Eccles (2006) also stated that academic adjustment, high school sports involvement, and psychological adjustment offer opportunities for positive involvement. Youth who participate in after-school clubs and sports have higher grades and educational attainment compared to non-participants and enjoy better peer relationships and understand the importance of school (Fredricks &
Eccles, 2006). Findings about school club experience for African American youth pointed to lower internalizing behavior interactions (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). A study by Henson, Larson, and Dworkin (2003) examined African American high school-aged youth’s after-school interests and involvement, where youth participation was determined as high for sports followed by faith-based and service activities. Sports are an important component in young Black male development. After-school programs that incorporate singing, arts, and other traditional activities sometimes are not as attractive as sports to young Black males (Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013). Many young Black males are involved in athletics and find many sports such as football, baseball, track and field, and even basketball to be very appealing. Social media around sports and sporting activities also enhance younger Black males’ interest and give them ideas about what they could become one day (Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013). A study by Simpkins, Vest, and Becnel (2010) mentioned sports and music as great experiences for urban minority youth. Both are skill-based and can help to change attitudes in positive directions, improve academic achievement and nutrition; and change emotions. An important factor in young Black male participation in these after-school programs is the focus on their self-ability and interest (Simpkins, Vest, & Becnel, 2010). Through after-school programs, the educational skill-base interests of young Black males could instruct educators in their planning of suitable programs for urban youth. The involvement in after-school activity can help with positive attitudes in-school and young Black male behaviors (Nelson & Gastic, 2009).

Irvin et al. (2010) examined schools, communities, and church activities as appropriate forms of support for academic achievement among African American youth.
The findings indicated that African American boys participate in and have strong interest in sports after-school and within the community. Furthermore, the authors stated that young African American males were actively involved in religious activities. Participation in sports and church activities were among the supports available to young Black males in rural and urban communities.

Another study examined the importance of participation in school-sponsored activities, such as sports, on understanding parental involvement and relationships. O’Bryan, Braddock, and Dawkins (2006) discovered an increased level of parental participation and support when African American youth were involved in sports after school. Sports serve as a connection among youth, parents, schools, and community. O’Bryan, Braddock, and Dawkins (2006) found that parents’ lack of education can be intimidating when supporting their children in school and after-school activities. Parents’ lack of knowledge could be a factor to the low involvement in their young Black male. The level of misunderstanding, level of education attained, the parent sense of belonging, and even awareness of programs and information can hinder the participation of their child. Parental support and inclusion is vital in maintaining the growth and development of African American young males.
Woodland (2008) investigated the after-school programs most effective for African American young males. These programs included the extracurricular activities model, mentoring model, and cultural rites of passage (ROP). The extracurricular activities model focuses on after-school programming to which youth are exposed, including sports, academic assistance, computer technology, and creative arts (Woodland, 2008). The mentoring model is essential to enabling young African American males to enjoy adult and caring supportive relationships (Woodland, 2008).

Take, for example, the Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring program, which provides services for at-risk and low-income youth ages 5–15 (Park, Yoon, & Crosby, 2016). This organization is known for targeting and assisting urban youth in areas of social risk, drug prevention, alcohol use, self-esteem issues, and academic performance (Park, Yoon, & Crosby, 2016). The goal of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring
program is to provide positive role models to assist youth in low-income areas through critical thinking, positive reinforcement, and opportunities to be involved in social and community activities (Park, Yoon, & Crosby, 2016). This is important to meet the needs of those urban disadvantaged youth and provide them with the necessary skills towards their individual academic achievement and social and healthy well-being.

Another model that is effective for African American young males is cultural rites of passage (ROP). This model was designed to provide young Black males with foundational information on their culture and race, and the challenges facing them today (Bass & Coleman, 1997). These rites of passage programs are believed to share similarities with African American school systems, which are not addressing the needs of young Black males in a Eurocentric or traditional educational system (Bass & Coleman, 1997). The ROP programs educate young African American youth on racism, capitalism, and the oppressive society (Bass & Coleman, 1997). Woodland (2008) described the ROP model as one that enhances culture-based discussions and activities for young Black males, increasing self-esteem, understanding of academic struggles, and cultural education. This model prepares young Black males from adolescence to manhood. The core elements needed in effective after-school programs for Black youth include adult-child relationships, flexibility, staff training and education, safe and secure environments, cultural components, family involvement, enriching curricula, one-on-one academic assistance, and rigorous and empirical evaluations (Woodland, 2008).
Section II: Agricultural-related Youth Programs

According to Phipps (2008), Agricultural-related youth programs are referred to as formal and non-formal programs tailored for youth ages 5-18 on agricultural education instruction, natural resources, and related topics in-school or after-school, and/or STEM-related clubs or programs that provide youth with healthy living, learning, literacy, leadership, professional development, life skills, and citizenship opportunities. Agricultural education is defined as instruction in agriculture and natural resources, taught in the secondary and post-secondary levels of the education system (Phipps et al., 2008). It involves preparing students for agricultural occupations, creation of job placement and entrepreneurship, and even agricultural literacy (Phipps et al., 2008). Classroom instruction in agricultural education includes laboratory work, supervised agricultural experiences, and student leadership (Phipps et al., 2008).

Classroom instruction can provide students with information on topics in agriculture and natural resources (Phipps et al., 2008). Supervised agricultural experience programs are based on providing students with opportunities to test their understanding of the agricultural field through real-life experiences (Phipps et al., 2008). Laboratory instruction has been demonstrated to provide students with experiences in teaching and learning in agriculture and natural resources (ex. DNA extraction) (Phipps et al., 2008).

Future Farmers of America

According to Phipps et al. (2008), the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) organization is an educational and non-profit youth organization; students enroll in-school agricultural education programs. In 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri, the Future
Farmers of America (FFA) was founded by 33 students in agriculture, state leaders, and members from the federal board for vocational education (Phipps et al., 2008). The FFA organization introduced is New Farmers of America in the year of 1928 that began young Black males in agricultural-related programs which lead to the organization of the “New Farmers of Virginia,” (National FFA Organization, 2015). The FFA organization thrives at the local, state, and national levels and has chapters all across the United States. Its motto is “Learning by doing.” FFA originated with 4 chapters and at least 125 members, and was designed for male students with an interest in future farming careers (Phipps et al., 2008). FFA is also involved in the community, assisting farmers and people in the community with new technologies and newly practiced farm practices (Phipps et al., 2008). Active involvement in local FFA chapters occurs in various agricultural-related schools across the United States. FFA chapters focus on the leadership development of students involved and knowledge gained through agricultural-related instruction (Phipps et al., 2008). Participation in FFA chapters can increase student understanding of informative points happening in their community but also local government (Phipps et al., 2008).

Diversity is a term frequently used in agricultural sector especially within education. The FFA membership identifies additional avenues of recruiting and retains all ethnic backgrounds and groups based on an agricultural school’s enrollment and membership make-up (Phipps et al., 2008). Educators and related specialists in the field are often asking the question: are any factors preventing minority students’ involvement in FFA programs and after-school activities? A study by Martin and Kitchel (2014) reported barriers in FFA, including the student, family and friends, school system,
neighborhoods, agricultural teacher, and the actual agricultural program. An increase in diverse role models in agricultural education is needed due to FFA activities not fitting into beliefs of youth, transportation, and care for family members (Martin & Kitchel, 2014).

**4-H Youth Development**

4-H Youth Development is a non-formal educational program for youth ages 5–18, offered by the Cooperative Extension Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program is focused on “Learning by Doing” meaning the type of learning for youth that can implement hands-on activities and practical (Borsches, 2007). The 4-H Youth Development Program has been developed to empower youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults (National 4-H Council, 2017). Since the 1970s, new programs have been implemented such as special interest, school enrichment, day camps, individual studies, and after-school clubs (U.S. Science and Education Administration, 1980). Programs are focused on leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H curriculum areas are focused on the environment and outdoors, STEM, practical learning, business and citizenship, creative arts, food and healthy living, and plant and animal sciences (National 4-H Council, 2017). These curriculum areas are delivered according to a variety of methods to educate and prepare youth to meet their full potential. However, involvement in outreach efforts has declined due to a lack of funding. Funding for these youth development programs is critical because when youth and their families are faced with financial constraints, they are less inclined to participate (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Community partners and organizations also
create partnerships and collaborate to raise funds and work together. In-kind donations are also a reliable source of funding for many youth development programs.

The 4-H youth development program utilizes structured activities as a way for youth to develop leadership skills, foster citizenship, and learn and understand critical life skills (Haas, Mincemoyer, & Perkins, 2015). Four-H programming is delivered through school enrichment, clubs, camps, and short-term/special interest and after-school activities (Downey et al., 2014). 4-H is also embedded in programming efforts for after-school programs offered to youth ages 5-18. However, 4-H involvement happens outside of school time, where many youths participate in and receive the necessary assistance to improve their academic performance and learn important life skills for their future (Downey et al., 2014). Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) defined after-school programs as the type of activities in which youth can engage during non-school hours. Formal after-school programs are supervised by adults, operate on a regular basis, involve other youth, and offer more than one activity (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Many financial contributors and leaders believe after-school programs should be designed to provide young people with more time to gain academic skills they learned during normal school hours. However, most after-school programming is aimed directly at improving academic achievement, but also includes social, academic, and recreational activities.

Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) noted that the goal of after-school programs is to provide youth with access to safe and positive environments during non-school hours. Research has shown the impact of youth participation in 4-H programs after school (Gupta, Grant, & Strauss, 2012; Heck et al. 2012; Paisley & Ferrari, 2005;
Wallace & Freitas, 2016). In addition, some minority youth find participating in 4-H to be meaningful, educational, and rewarding as they have the opportunity to be around positive adult role models (Serido, Borden, & Wiggs, 2014). However, African American male youth participation is limited due to many factors and issues.

**Influential Factors Stemming from Participation**

A number of researchers (see, e.g., Cano & Bankston, 1992; Russell & Heck, 2008; Schinker, 2010; Weikert et al., 2014) have explored factors associated with participation and non-participation of minority youth in the 4-H Youth Development Program. Several important findings relating to access, barriers, and parental involvement have been identified as relevant factors in minority youth’s participation in 4-H programs. Noted as a salient issue and serving as the basis of these findings were perceptions of and factors in participation. Many studies noted factors perceived by ethnic minority youth as positive influences; and influences perceived by the parents of minority youth as barriers to their children’s participation.

Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) mentioned that the reason for low participation in certain after-school programming is the level of access to other enriching activities in their communities, homes, and schools. Logistical barriers such as family, individual constraints and lack of interest play a major role in youth’s low participation in after-school programming. Financial costs often limit access and participation despite the availability of programs (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Transportation is also a common barrier to participation in after-school programs. Some urban minority youth might have struggles staying after school or meeting at certain locations in major cities due to bus scheduling, lack of parent involvement or working, and timeframe of
school time and extracurricular activities. In other cases, high school youth living in low-income communities were unable to participate in after-school programs due to caring for their siblings while parents were working during normal after-school hours (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Employment of youth also influences participation in after-school programs. When they reach the required age to work, many youths living in urban and low-income households begin working part-time jobs to help their families.

Several researchers (Cano & Bankston, 1992; Weikert et al., 2014) have pointed to a caring adult with a common tie or interest in a program as youth’s motivation for joining an after-school program. Despite their interest and involvement, several constraints have been noted by program participants. These include improvement of new knowledge and material for urban audiences, additional funding for more staff in urban areas, and lack of equitable treatment and criteria for judging projects. In addition, urban youth were less excited about special projects such as animal science due to having limited experience based on urban locations and not being near farm areas in rural settings (Cano & Bankston, 1992). Involvement in after-school club programs that require animal projects is a hardship for those living in particular areas.

Youth also noted that if more time were spent on planning and marketing 4-H programs, more youth would be aware of them and participate (Cano & Bankston, 1992). Parents mentioned that many adults would be interested in knowing more about the 4-H program. Gill, Ewing, and Bruce (2010) reported that parents and guidance counselors were the greatest influences on 4-H members’ decisions to enroll and participate in 4-H programs. Factors that affected project selection were youth wanting
to work with animals, the desire to improve public speaking skills, and friend involvement (Gill, Ewing, & Bruce, 2010). The factors of “time” and participation in sports were additional reasons for youth’s nonparticipation in 4-H programs (Cano & Bankston, 1992; Gill, Ewing, & Bruce, 2010). A study by Ingram and Syvertsen (2005) presented findings that suggest that urban youth experience challenges due to financial and transportation constraints, lack of field trips and educational experiences outside the county’s, lack of environmental and creative arts programs to expand future academic and career choices, and lack of exposure to sports. Some factors influencing youth involvement in their community include positive feedback/reinforcement, leaders taking action and creating a culture in which success can be achieved through hard work and dedication, emphasizing the importance of giving back, encouraging parental support and motivation from peers, and establishing a strong sense of behavioral well-being (Brennan, Barnett, & Baugh, 2007).

Section III: Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Theoretical perspectives need to be identified and applied in examinations of young African American urban males. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of Human Development, the Ecodevelopmental Theory, and the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory all offer insights helpful in understanding Black youth. These frameworks support several factors of importance to this line of research. The theories focus on linking cultural and racial meanings towards young Black male’s identity outlook. In addition, the theories will explain how young Black males develop and adapt to certain obstacles within their environment. Figure 2.1 displays the frameworks within
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of Human Development. Each framework is described and has a connection with systems within Bronfenbrenner’s model.

Figure 2.2. Framework for understanding African American males and their strengths
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of Human Development may be used to examine developmental opportunities that youth could encounter in after-school club/programming. Encounters could stem from involvement in interpersonal relationships, mentoring, and participation in leadership meetings, interacting with other youth, community service projects, and accepting and understanding culture. Thus, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory can be used to illustrate how after-school programs or clubs can foster potential participation in positive youth development programs.

Figure 2.3. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory of development (from National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016)
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner’s conceptualization of human development suggests that development occurs through engagement in activities that foster competence (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory is a system of human development stages that incorporates cultural, social, economic, and political contexts in individual growth (Ozdogru, 2011). This relationship occurs within individuals’ contexts (e.g., environmental systems within communities and society) to understand individual interactions. Relationships with adults and other youth through participation can contribute to the understanding of intergenerational equity and to the adolescent development process (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

This Ecological Systems Model consists of five environmental levels: 
*microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem* (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). Level 1, or the *microsystem*, involves the direct environment through which the child interacts in school or other non-school locations such as a recreation center, local neighborhood, or church (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). The Level 2 system, also known as the *mesosystem*, involves connections among two or more settings in which the youth participates; these connections are based on relationships stemming from family and school experiences (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). Level 3 is the *exosystem*, which focuses on one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as a participant, but the individual can be affected by situations in certain settings (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). Level 4, known as the *macrosystem*, is the cultural environment that affects the individual via specific beliefs, norms, or traditions (Ozdogru, 2011). The final level, Level 5, is the
**chronosystem** that occurs through patterns of events and transitions over the individual's life course (Ozdogru, 2011).

**Figure 2.4.** Ecodevelopmental microsystem risk/protective factors (from Pantin, Schwartz, Sullivan, Prado & Szapocznik, 2004).

**Ecodevelopmental Theory**

The Ecodevelopmental Theory is a framework that extends Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory and focuses on the social environment of youth and interactions with the child's parents or adults’ work environments (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). According to this theory, youth become active agents in determining their settings or outcomes. Fredricks and Simpkins (2012) pointed to families’ influence on youth
involvement in after-school or extracurricular activities. The Ecodevelopmental Theory identifies interactions within the microsystem closest to the individual or child's life. These interactions could be with friends, teachers, and family. The theory focuses on the role of family and the relationship between the child and parent (Yabiku et al., 2010).

Figure 2.5. A phenomenological variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (from Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997)
Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory

The Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) is another framework that extends Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory to the child’s cultural environment as it influences the creation of their identity (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). The PVEST (see Figure 2.4) components consist of vulnerability or risk, experienced stress, coping strategies, identity, and outcomes of livelihood (Corprew & Cunningham, 2012). The first level, vulnerability, involves protective and risks factors (McGe, 2013). This level is focused on stereotypes based on race, SES, or even physical characteristics (Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997). Stress focuses on confronting experiences in the child's life (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). This second level focuses on stresses such as daily struggles as a teenager, neighborhood problems, and even school and social supports (Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997).

The third level, Coping strategies, are included in the model to explore young Black males’ methods of handling exposure to stressors connected to the urban context (Crockett & Carlo, 2016). These coping methods are focused on maladaptive and adaptive solutions which can aid in problem solving (Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997). The fourth level is the emergent identity that originates from how youth cope with situations can be positive or negative (Crockett & Carlo, 2016).

Young Black males may see themselves as having a positive identity by being associated with traits such as excelling in school and emulating a positive adult figure in their family (Crockett & Carlo, 2016). A young Black male who has a negative identity may resent school and may be engaged in destructive behavior (Crockett & Carlo, 2016). This level can include cultural goals of identity, self-efficacy, and personal identity.
(Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997). The last level of the model is known as life outcomes. These *life outcomes* are explored to see if young Black males are being influenced by behaviors that shape their own identity (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). Those could include the behavioral or health-related outcomes (Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997).

![Diagram of Strengths of Black Youth Model](image)

**Figure 2.6.** A Strengths-based Model for Black Youth (from Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008)

**Understanding Strengths of Black Youth**

Black youth distribute strength qualities through their individual abilities and explore various life experiences from racial and ethnic challenges that stem from the process of developing individual self-esteem and positive change (Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008). A Model of Strengths of Black Youth focuses on aligning coping strategies, racial socialization, and barriers that Black youth
encounter (Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008). The model’s developers have indicated that the model should be used as a resistance method rather than resilience, to focus on the involvement of most Black youth (Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008). The use of “strengths” in this model refers to “coping strategies” that Black youth maintain on a daily basis while adapting to their environments and social structures (Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008).
Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate African American high school males’ perception of ethnic identity development, community involvement, and experiences, and how these influences their participation in agricultural-related youth programs. This chapter provides an overview of the research design, sites selected, sampling method, and procedures for data collection, instruments, and data analysis.

Research Design

The study addressed African American high school males’ perception of ethnic identity development, community involvement, and experiences and how these influenced their participation in agricultural-related youth programs. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used in this study. This involved collecting quantitative data (surveys) first and then explaining the quantitative results with in-depth qualitative data (gathered from focus groups). Creswell (2014) stated that explanatory sequential mixed methods were a good option for a two-phase project in which the researcher planned to collect quantitative data and then analyze the results. The results from the first phase were used in developing questions asked to purposefully selected participants in the qualitative phase (Creswell, 2014). In the first quantitative phase of the study, ethnic identity was defined according to answers to the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure revised (MEIM-R) instrument. A community involvement questionnaire was revised and adapted from the Prudential Spirit of Community Youth Survey. The second, qualitative phase was conducted using follow-up focus groups to help explain the quantitative results. These focus groups involved a subsample from the agricultural-related program group (10 participants) and a non-involved group (10 participants). In
this exploratory follow-up, the tentative plan was to explore agricultural-related experiences reported by young Black males compared to those non-involved young Black males in similar urban settings. To ensure a broad representation of Black males in urban Pennsylvania counties, three schools were selected based on African American demographic data. This study used inferential data analysis, utilizing descriptive statistics, and multiple ANOVA in a mixed-method approach.

Table 3.1

*Research Questions and Analysis Methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Analysis method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males self-identify as measured by the (revised) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R)?</td>
<td>Ethnic Group (Item 1), Belonging (Item 2), Membership (Item 3), Understanding (Item 4), Other People (Item 5), Attachment (Item 6)</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, degrees of freedom, p-score, mean, SD, T-test), Mean Comparisons, ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males perceive community involvement?</td>
<td>Own Life, Place to live, Feeling on Community Involvement, Satisfaction, Knowledge &amp; Attitudes, Importance &amp; Participation, Family Involvement</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, degrees of freedom, p-score, mean, SD, T-test), Mean Comparisons, Z-scores, ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do the experiences of high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs differ from those of non-involved Black males within similar urban communities?</td>
<td>Barriers, Relationships, Knowledge &amp; Attitudes, Importance &amp; Participation,</td>
<td>Content Analysis Phenomenological Methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multiple ANOVAs and descriptive statistics was used to help determine whether the combination of ethnic identity development, community involvement, and agricultural-related youth program experiences differed with respect to age, location, grade, socioeconomic status, high-level education of parents, living location, and household size. It was projected that the null hypothesis for the study would include no significant difference in perceived personal characteristics between participants and nonparticipants in agricultural-related youth programs, no significant differences in nonparticipants’ and participants’ views of community involvement, and no significant difference in non-participants’ and participants’ views of the importance of life skills.

**Participants and Sample**

The participants were purposefully selected according to their unique perspective. A target sample of 255 young African American males’ ages 13 to 18 were recruited for this study. A pilot study was conducted first, using a questionnaire and semi-structured interview techniques; participants were asked semi-structured questions about their unique expertise in agricultural-related youth programs and how it could contribute to future research and programming efforts to encourage greater participation. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants for this study. Convenience sampling is commonly used in mixed methods research. In this case, the researcher chose the units of analysis for specific purposes, such as people, communities, and countries (Bernard, 2013). Patton (1980) noted that this sampling, researchers can choose participants who provide a wealth of information that is
suitable for detailed research and that are convenient. Random sampling took place for the focus groups in the study.

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Urban Neighborhood and Enrollment**

**Data for Selected Locations**

Socio-demographic factors in urban areas could truly indicate effects on youth involvement. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of the population is essential to laying the foundation before the actual research data are collected. Table 3.2 offers information from a data set available online, published by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011-2015). The population estimates are highest in Philadelphia and lowest in Harrisburg. Yet, the percentage of people under 18 is the highest in Harrisburg and the lowest in Pittsburgh. Among racial origins displayed, the African American percentage was highest in Harrisburg and lowest in Pittsburgh. All urban areas had more females than males (between 51.9% and 52.8%). The number of persons in households is the highest in Philadelphia (2.59%) and lowest in Pittsburgh (2.13%). All family arrangements in terms of persons per household were similar to percentages for the whole state of Pennsylvania (2.49%). Educational characteristics of urban areas showed Pittsburgh having the highest percentage of people completing high school or higher (91.4%).

Transportation in urban areas can sometimes be very difficult, causing people to struggle to get to work. The longest commute time in minutes was in Philadelphia (32.5 minutes). Finally, household income and per capita income were lowest in Harrisburg ($19,402), where the poverty rate was highest, at 31.8%, compared to other urban areas.
Table 3.2

Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Research Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Harrisburg</th>
<th>Pittsburgh</th>
<th>Philadelphia</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population Estimates (n)</td>
<td>48,904</td>
<td>303,625</td>
<td>1,567,872</td>
<td>12,787,277</td>
<td>323,127,513</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age and Gender (%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
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<td>24.0</td>
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<td>47.2</td>
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<td>50.8</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (not Hispanic /Latino)</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families and Living Arrangements (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per household</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (% of persons that are 25 years and older)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate or higher</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transportation (workers that are 16 or older)**

| Mean travel time to work (minutes)   | 20.1           | 23.4           | 32.5              | 26.3           | 25.9           |

**Income and Poverty**

| Median household income (dollars)    | 33,289         | 40,715         | 38,253            | 53,599         | 53,889         |
| Per capita income (dollars)         | 19,402         | 28,097         | 22,919            | 29,291         | 28,930         |
| Persons in poverty %                | 31.8           | 22.9           | 26.4              | 13.2           | 13.5           |

**Geography**

| Population per square mile           | 6,092.0        | 5,521.4        | 11,379.5          | 283.9          | 87.4           |

Note. Adapted from quick facts, U.S. Bureau of Census, 2011/2015
(https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/harrisburgcitypennsylvania,pittsburghcitypennsylvania,philadelphiacitypennsylvania,PA,US#viewtop)
Socio-Demographic and Enrollment Data of Urban Locations and Schools

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show enrollment numbers by gender, grade, and ethnicity within the three schools and their corresponding counties in the 2015-2016 academic year. A look at students’ enrollment data and demographics provides important insights into the specific schools and areas in which they live. This could provide valuable context for the findings. In all urban areas, the percentage of African American males enrolled in high school in Philadelphia was greater than in the other urban areas (Pittsburgh and Harrisburg). In Pennsylvania, 51.3 % of enrolled students were males while 48.6% were females. Urban school “B” had the highest enrollment of males (55.1%), while urban charter school “C” had the highest total population of African American students (86.9%).
Table 3.3
Urban Area School Enrollment by Gender, Ethnicity, and Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Setting/County</th>
<th>Harrisburg (Dauphin Co)</th>
<th>Pittsburgh (Allegheny Co)</th>
<th>Philadelphia (Philadelphia Co)</th>
<th>Pennsylvania (Statewide)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enroll (Grades 9-12)</td>
<td>15,302</td>
<td>46,846</td>
<td>56,068</td>
<td>546,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7,616</td>
<td>24,014</td>
<td>28,336</td>
<td>280,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7,704</td>
<td>22,832</td>
<td>27,732</td>
<td>265,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8,974</td>
<td>33,719</td>
<td>7,835</td>
<td>384,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2,299</td>
<td>9,416</td>
<td>31,828</td>
<td>79,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,692</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>7,631</td>
<td>50,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>1,723</td>
<td>3,933</td>
<td>19,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>1,196</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>10,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>3,216</td>
<td>12,021</td>
<td>12,678</td>
<td>142,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>3,715</td>
<td>11,780</td>
<td>14,948</td>
<td>139,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>3,610</td>
<td>11,402</td>
<td>13,394</td>
<td>132,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>3,761</td>
<td>11,626</td>
<td>11,811</td>
<td>131,491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4  
*School Enrollment by Gender, Ethnicity and Grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban Public School A</th>
<th>Urban Public School B</th>
<th>Urban Charter School C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Enroll (Grades 9-12)</strong></td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>205 (36.1%)</td>
<td>854 (55.1%)</td>
<td>297 (47.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>363 (63.9%)</td>
<td>695 (44.9%)</td>
<td>323 (52.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>159 (27.9%)</td>
<td>277 (27.4%)</td>
<td>205 (33.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>154 (27.1%)</td>
<td>235 (23.3%)</td>
<td>190 (30.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>96 (16.9%)</td>
<td>247 (24.5%)</td>
<td>115 (18.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>160 (28.1%)</td>
<td>250 (24.8%)</td>
<td>110 (17.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant Criteria

The selection of study schools was based on the presence of agricultural-related youth programs within the selected high schools. Those high schools selected were in urban areas of Pennsylvania. Age groups were selected based on data from Penn State Extension, which shows a decrease in enrollment among minority youth in this particular age bracket (13-18 years old). The sample size also was selected based on demographics of the area and school.

Permission to recruit participants from the schools was obtained from each school’s administration after sending them a recruitment letter and scheduling and engaging in a meeting. Participants self-identified as being (a) African-American male, (b) between the ages of 13–18, (c) enrolled in a STEM or agricultural-related focus high school in urban settings in Pennsylvania, and (d) participating in an after-school/extra-curricular, or agricultural-related youth program (e.g., FFA, 4-H, etc.).

Data Collection & Analysis

The Office of Research Protections at the researcher’s higher education institution approved the data collection instruments in January 2017 (STUDY ID: STUDY00006340). The study sample of high school age African American males was recruited with the assistance of an urban extension center, and local school agricultural education programs. A convenience sample of three schools in urban settings in Pennsylvania was selected. Based on urban locations and percentage of African American males enrolled in high schools in Pennsylvania, the target schools included two public schools and one charter school. Figure 3.1 shows a logic model for the data collection process and potential outcomes for this research study.
Figure 3.1. Logic model of data collection process and potential expected outcomes of research study
Data collection began in late January 2017 at the urban high schools selected for this study, and continued through April 2017. Documentation provided to the schools included a description of the study, consent forms, and the researcher’s contact information. Passive parental consent forms were also sent to obtain parents’ agreement or refusal to allow their child to participate in the study. All data collection procedures took place at the participants’ schools. A total of 15–25 participants completed the study instrument in a computer classroom. Survey responses were collected using Turning Point Technology clickers to fully engage individuals in the questionnaires and assist with reading levels.

Clickers are used for educator understanding, teaching and assessment purposes, in addition so instructors can gauge their students on the lessons (Bird & McClelland, 2010). Parmer, Parmer, and Struempler (2012) researched the effectiveness of using clickers for test-taking within extension programs. The benefits of collecting large amounts of data electronically and having a “game approach” to engage students in answering survey questions without the normal pencil and paper survey. Data collection visits were scheduled with administration and teacher approval in the respective schools. After all surveys had been completed, two follow-up focus groups were conducted. Participants were randomly selected to participate in a non-agricultural-related participant group (10 participants) and agricultural-related participant group (10 participants). Participants had access to and were willing to use email, internet, and telephone.

Rossman and Rallis (2012) indicated that interviews with focus groups should involve 7 to 10 people who are not well known to each other and have been selected
because they share similar characteristics. Utilizing semi-structured interviews as a primary research approach and focus groups of participants enabled the gathering of rich data for the study. Interviews and focus groups are useful because they offer the opportunity for “back to forth” dialogue in qualitative data collection (Gibson, 2012). The researcher can learn more about/gain insights into family or youth feelings, opinions, and experiences on issues involving their family environment (Gibson, 2012). Society is becoming more accustomed to the voice of engaged youth in communities; as an outcome, youth are treated as adults and reporters of their own experiences (Gibson, 2012). Some goals for interviews and focus groups with families and youth included building trust, obtaining informed consent, facilitating understanding, encouraging thoughtful and detailed responses, and promoting creative expression and enjoyment (Gibson, 2012).

**Validity and Reliability**

The researcher piloted a sample questionnaire with 6–8 participants (ages 13–18) to assess the types of questions to use in the study and to ensure that data from the questions are valid and reliable. Validity is the precision with which results can accurately reflect the data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Reliability focuses on the consistency of procedures, including accounting for personal and research method biases that may have influenced the results (Noble & Smith, 2015). In this study, this was assessed by asking participants to complete the questionnaire more than once to assess internal steadiness. Suitability was determined by asking the participants for their impressions of the questionnaire during the validity testing. This process helped
identify main concerns and form the basis for the types of questions to be used in the study.

**Description of Instruments**

Participants completed two instruments, both of which included demographic items. Participants were asked to complete the following instruments: the Multidimensional Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM; Phinney & Ong, 2007), and a Community Involvement questionnaire composed of some questions from the Prudential Spirit of Community Youth Survey: A Survey of High School Students on Community Involvement (Wirthlin Group, 1995). The demographic information on the questionnaire included age, grade, urban neighborhood, level of education completed by parents, and specific school. In terms of future careers, participants chose one of the following identifiers: (a) government, military, criminal justice, law; (b) education, teaching; (c) STEM field (ex. biology, engineering, agriculture, environmental); (d) fashion design, arts; and (e) digital media, technology, music.

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R) (Appendix A) was used to measure ethnic identity in youth adults. MEIM-R is an instrument assessing affiliation with an ethnic group (Brown, Unger, Mevi, Hedderson, Quesenberry, & Ferrara, 2014). This instrument has 6 items and has been revised from the original scale of 14 items to focus on exploration and commitment (Phinney & Ong, 2007). This was done so that both subscales can be equally weighted. The MEIM-R scale has been used in various studies and shows reliability when research participants have more education (Herrington, 2014). The reliability analyses for the two subscales were good—.76 for exploration and .78 for commitment (Phinney & Ong,
The MEIM-R 6 item instrument had a Cronbach alpha of .81 (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The MEIM-R scale is set up in a Likert-type survey (1-*strongly disagree* to 5-*strongly agree*) that is composed of 6 items measuring two factors of a person’s *commitment* to their identity, and their *exploration* of their identity (Dorazio, 2013). Items 1, 4, and 5 measure *exploration* and items 2, 3, and 6 measure *commitment*. According to Dorazio (2013), participant scores are based on two mean scores (ethnic identity *exploration* and *commitment* to ethnic identity). Confirmatory factor analysis also has been highly recommended for use in research due to its ability to enable the researcher to compare measurement models with good validity (Dorazio, 2013; Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The Community Involvement questionnaire (Appendix B) composed of some questions from the Prudential Spirit of Community Youth Survey: A Survey of High School Students on Community Involvement (Wirthlin Group, 1995) was used to assess participants’ perceptions and experiences in community involvement and programs. The instrument has 27 items, including demographic questions. The survey consists of a Likert-type scale of (1-*strongly disagree* to 5-*strongly agree*). Other items in the questionnaire focus on student participation in agricultural-related programs and community activities. Items focus on *quality of life, perception* of community involvement, *knowledge and attitudes* towards community involvement, and *importance and participation* with community involvement. The subscale on knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement items includes statements such as, “I think my school system makes it a point to highlight the importance of participating in community activities.” The subscale on importance and participation
in community involvement includes statements such as “Being involved in the community helps me to be a better person in school and at home.” In this community involvement questionnaire, the coefficient alpha of .378 measuring knowledge and attitudes indicated low reliability. In addition, the coefficient alpha of .623 indicated that there could be acceptable reliability for scales measuring importance and participation with community involvement.

**Data Analysis**

Before analyzing the survey data, all survey data were saved in Microsoft Excel and converted for analysis using SPSS v.23.0. Then data were cleaned, run for frequencies and checked for range values. Next, checking for validity and reliability was done. Then, descriptive statistics for frequencies for categorical and ordinal variables were analyzed. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to describe results through means, standard deviations, and range of scores (Creswell, 2014). Next, descriptive statistics and multiple ANOVA were used to determine whether the combination of ethnic identity, community involvement and agricultural-related youth program experiences differed by grade, age, location, household size, SES, and highest level of parents’ education. Bernard (2013) indicated that when there are multiple dependent variables, ANOVA/MANOVA is most commonly used.
To analyze the qualitative data in this study, a descriptive transcendental phenomenological strategy was followed. The approach is used to identify the arrangement of experiences as described by research participants. Content analysis in this study was also used with data from the focus groups which involves coding and classifying data to highlight the most important findings (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Phenomenology is best suited for this study based on “lived through” experiences and an approach that is useful to the natural attitude toward everyday life (Salter & McGuire, 2014). This study explored the lived experience of the participants in order to understand the essence of each person’s account of their experiences as these related to the phenomenon in question—Black male involvement in agricultural-related programs. The element of transcendental phenomenology was used in analyzing the data by reducing the information to significant statements or quotes and
then combining them into themes. First, the researcher identified the phenomenon that defined the shared experience and then bracketed and interpreted for researcher bias and expectations. Then data were collected within focus groups of non-participants and participants in agricultural-related programs, and on the universal nature of experiences. The researcher conducted interviews using semi-structured questions, to facilitate discussion among participants and present themes.

Additionally, the researcher will ensured question clarity by utilizing open-ended and detailed follow-up questions to obtain elaboration because doing so promotes self-discovery and reflection (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). A variety of introductory, transition, and ending questions were used to gather data to answer the research questions. All questions were reviewed by experts to ensure appropriate structure, validity, and content. Transcripts from the focus groups were coded using ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software. The researcher recorded findings and additional information collected using descriptive field notes (Bernard, 2013). Triangulation was used when data from different sources of information were used to examine evidence from the sources to answer particular research study questions (Creswell, 2014). Utilizing triangulation in this study, the researcher was able to reduce bias and potential risks, and gain more insight on interesting points (Creswell, 2014).
Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents major findings from the research study. First, the chapter shares demographic profiles of participants. Second, it presents the results of the MEIM-R measure between the relationship of Black young males who participate in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved young Black males. Third, it presents the results from the research study as descriptive statistics and multiple ANOVAs that measured the perceptions of community involvement among involved young Black males who participate in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved young Black males. Fourth, it presents the qualitative findings discussing experiences of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared from those of non-involved Black males within similar urban communities.

This was a mixed method study in which the qualitative data blended with the quantitative data to answer, the research questions. The focus group questions presented items about attitudes, beliefs about self-identity and community involvement and participation in extracurricular activities among African American high school age youth in agricultural-related youth programs and those that do not. In addition, participants were asked their opinions about opportunities provided to young Black males and their view on being a Black male in today’s society. For each of the three research questions, the results from the survey and focus groups are presented below.
Descriptive Statistics

Data were collected from African American high school age males in three urban schools in Pennsylvania. In total, 255 students responded to the survey. About 44.7% of the survey participants were students in an Urban Public-School A ($n=71, 27.8\%$) and Urban Public-School B ($n=43, 16.9\%$) and others were students in an Urban Charter School C ($n=141, 55.3\%$). The percentage distribution of students grades 9-12 was 96.7% and only 3.3% with advanced subjects. The students involved in the study in the age range but taking high school courses were classified as advanced subjects. These students could be in junior high or gifted/talented educational areas. About 31.8% ($n=75$) of the respondents lived in Urban Pioneer, and about 27.1% ($n=64$) lived in Urban Core.

Seventy-five respondents (31.5%) reported that their parents had a high school degree. Fifty-seven (23.9%) students reported that their parents had a graduate degree whereas 51 students (21.4%) had a university degree. In response to a question about future career interests, 32.9% ($n=78$) indicated digital media/technology/music whereas 5.5% ($n=13$) indicated education/teaching. Participants also considered STEM fields ($n=66, 27.8\%$) as the highest future career of their choice. A slight majority of participants ($n=132, 54.8\%$) were 15-16 years and 4 students were ages 19-20. Tables 4.1.1 - 4.1.4 show demographic characteristics of the participants from two urban public schools (A and B) and one public charter school. Table 4.1.1 shows the distribution of students aged 15-16, which was almost consistent in all three urban schools.
Table 4.1.1

*Demographic Characteristics of Students at Participant Schools by Age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>17-18</th>
<th>19-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School A</td>
<td>14 (20.0%)</td>
<td>30 (42.9%)</td>
<td>24 (34.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School B</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>24 (57.1%)</td>
<td>17 (40.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Charter School C</td>
<td>21 (16.3%)</td>
<td>78 (60.5%)</td>
<td>28 (21.7%)</td>
<td>2 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.2

*Demographic Characteristics of Students at Participant Schools by Grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Grade 9</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
<th>Grade 11</th>
<th>Grade 12</th>
<th>Advanced Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School A</td>
<td>30 (43.5%)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>18 (26.1%)</td>
<td>15 (21.7%)</td>
<td>4 (5.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School B</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>22 (52.4%)</td>
<td>19 (45.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Charter School C</td>
<td>67 (51.9%)</td>
<td>31 (24.0%)</td>
<td>11 (8.5%)</td>
<td>17 (13.2%)</td>
<td>3 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1.3

**Demographic Characteristics of Students at Participant Schools by Neighborhood Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Type</th>
<th>Urban Core</th>
<th>Urban Pioneer</th>
<th>Suburbs</th>
<th>Historical</th>
<th>Rural/Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School A</td>
<td>22 (31.9%)</td>
<td>23 (33.3%)</td>
<td>10 (14.5%)</td>
<td>7 (10.1%)</td>
<td>7 (10.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School B</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>19 (48.7%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Charter School C</td>
<td>38 (29.7%)</td>
<td>33 (25.8%)</td>
<td>21 (16.4%)</td>
<td>15 (11.7%)</td>
<td>21 (16.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.4

**Demographic Characteristics of Students at Participant Schools by Parents Level of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents Level of Education</th>
<th>Less than High School</th>
<th>High School Degree</th>
<th>Vocational/Technical School/Trade</th>
<th>University Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School A</td>
<td>8 (11.6%)</td>
<td>17 (24.6%)</td>
<td>10 (14.5%)</td>
<td>20 (29.0%)</td>
<td>14 (20.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School B</td>
<td>6 (14.9%)</td>
<td>15 (36.6%)</td>
<td>3 (7.3%)</td>
<td>9 (22.0%)</td>
<td>8 (19.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Charter School C</td>
<td>9 (7.0%)</td>
<td>43 (33.6%)</td>
<td>19 (14.8%)</td>
<td>22 (17.2%)</td>
<td>35 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 presents the distribution of respondents based on school in which they were enrolled and there from involvement in agriculture related programs. The majority of students were from urban charter school C (125, 53.4%), next to Urban Public-School A (70, 29.91%). Among students involved in agricultural-related programs, 55 (48.2%) were involved in FFA and 29 (25.4%) were involved in horticulture and urban gardening; see Table 4.2. Relatively few respondents were involved in 4-H programs other than FFA and horticulture and urban garden. Five respondents (4.4%) participated in 4-H programs. No students from urban public schools participated in 4-H. A large majority of respondents (n=92, 73.6%) in Urban Charter School C did not participate in ag-related programs. On the hand, the majority respondents from Urban Public-School A (n=60, 85.7%) did participate in ag-related programs.

Tables 4.3–4.6 display a breakdown of demographic characteristics by the two groups (Ag-related and Non-Ag Related). The data in Table 4.3 show that majority of students were between the ages of 15-16 in both groups. Non-agricultural-related respondents were in the 9th grade in their urban school. Table 4.5 shows that both groups’ participants resided in Urban Pioneer neighborhoods from similar urban areas. Table 4.6 indicates that the parents of students in both groups’ had a high school degree as their level of education.
Table 4.2

*Number of Students Involved in Agricultural-related Programs by Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement</th>
<th>Total not in Ag Programs</th>
<th>FFA</th>
<th>4-H</th>
<th>Horticulture / Urban Gardening</th>
<th>Other Ag Youth Programs</th>
<th>Total in Ag Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School A</td>
<td>10 (14.3%)</td>
<td>44 (62.9%)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>12 (17.1%)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>60 (85.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public School B</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>13 (33.3%)</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>21 (53.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Charter School C</td>
<td>92 (73.6%)</td>
<td>6 (4.8%)</td>
<td>3 (2.4%)</td>
<td>4 (3.2%)</td>
<td>20 (16.0%)</td>
<td>33 (26.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3

Number of Student Participants Based on Age and Agricultural-related Program Involvement Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>17-18</th>
<th>19-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>14 (12.5%)</td>
<td>59 (52.7%)</td>
<td>36 (32.1%)</td>
<td>3 (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Ag-related</td>
<td>21 (17.8%)</td>
<td>66 (55.9%)</td>
<td>31 (26.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4

Number of Student Participants Based on Grade and Agricultural-related Program Involvement Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Grade 9</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
<th>Grade 11</th>
<th>Grade 12</th>
<th>Advanced Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>40 (36.0%)</td>
<td>21 (18.9%)</td>
<td>27 (24.3%)</td>
<td>17 (15.3%)</td>
<td>6 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Ag-related</td>
<td>54 (45.8%)</td>
<td>31 (26.3%)</td>
<td>18 (15.3%)</td>
<td>13 (11.0%)</td>
<td>2 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5

*Number of Student Participants Based on Neighborhood Type and Agricultural-related Program Involvement Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Type</th>
<th>Urban Core</th>
<th>Urban Pioneer</th>
<th>Suburbs</th>
<th>Historical</th>
<th>Rural/Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>32 (28.6%)</td>
<td>0 (35.7%)</td>
<td>15 (13.4%)</td>
<td>14 (12.5%)</td>
<td>11 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Ag-related</td>
<td>30 (26.3%)</td>
<td>2 (28.1%)</td>
<td>21 (18.4%)</td>
<td>11 (9.6%)</td>
<td>20 (17.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6

*Number of Student Participants Based on Parents Educational Attainment and Agricultural-related Program Involvement Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents Level of Education</th>
<th>Less than High School</th>
<th>High School Degree</th>
<th>Vocational/Technical School/Trade</th>
<th>University Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>13 (11.7%)</td>
<td>31 (27.9%)</td>
<td>5 (13.5%)</td>
<td>28 (25.2%)</td>
<td>24 (21.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Ag-related</td>
<td>9 (7.6%)</td>
<td>39 (33.1%)</td>
<td>6 (13.6%)</td>
<td>21 (17.8%)</td>
<td>33 (28.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Research Question 1:** How do high school age Black males involve in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males self-identify as measured by the revised Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R)?

The revised Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R) was used to collect data needed to answer research question one; it consisted of six items measuring ethnic identity of high school age African-American male students. The Cronbach alpha of the MEIM-R was calculated to be .702. Table 4.7, presents the number, percentage, means, and standard deviations of each question in the MEIM-R. Table 4.7, shows that the means of the MEIM-R items ranged from 3.09 out of 3.69. The range was 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Reviewing the findings located many significant differences in the two group (ag-related and non-ag related).

The first item on the MEIM-R shows that 34% of respondents \( n=77 \) indicated that they spent time to find out more about their history, traditions, and customs and 23.6% did not spend time. When asked about their feeling of strong attachment toward their own ethnic group (item six), 132 (56.4%) felt a strong attachment to their own ethnic group and 33 (14.1%) respondents reported that they do not have a strong feeling of attachment to their ethnic group.

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 present the responses of students of the MEIM-R by the two groups (Ag-related and Non-ag-related). The results presented in Tables 4.8 and 4.9 show that a relatively greater number of agricultural-related students feel a strong sense of belonging and a strong attachment towards their own ethnic group. As can be seen in those two tables, 63.9% \( n=69 \) and 66.4% \( n=71 \) of ag related students were in agreement with questions on strong sense of belonging and a strong attachment to their
own ethnic group, respectively when compared to non-involved participants. Non-involved was reported as sense of belonging (n=62, 54.3%) and strong attachment (n=58, 49.9%).

Table 4.10 shows t-test comparison results on the MEIM-R for ag involved and non-involved students. Results indicated no significant differences on any of the items on the MEIM-R. Items on the MEIM-R about ethnic identity included questions such as: spending time trying to find out more about their ethnic group (item one), having a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group (item two), understanding of their ethnic group membership (item three), and (item five) talking to other people in order to learn more about ethnic group between students who are involved in ag-related program and students who are not involved in such programs at the .10 significant level. However, there was a significant difference between the groups for items related to students doing things to understand own ethnic identity ($t=1.898; p=0.059$) and attachment to their own ethnic group ($t=2.274; p=0.024$). The results showed that students participating in ag related programs are more likely to have done things that help them to understand their ethnic background better. In addition, students involved in ag-related programs are more likely to feel a strong attachment to their ethnic group.
Table 4.7  
Students’ Responses to MEIM-R Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>26 (11.2%)</td>
<td>29 (12.4%)</td>
<td>101 (43.3%)</td>
<td>52 (22.3%)</td>
<td>25 (10.7%)</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>12 (5.2%)</td>
<td>16 (6.9%)</td>
<td>67 (28.9%)</td>
<td>74 (31.9%)</td>
<td>63 (27.2%)</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>13 (5.6%)</td>
<td>17 (7.3%)</td>
<td>67 (28.8%)</td>
<td>82 (35.2%)</td>
<td>54 (23.2%)</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>13 (5.5%)</td>
<td>28 (11.9%)</td>
<td>82 (34.9%)</td>
<td>72 (30.6%)</td>
<td>40 (17.0%)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>13 (5.5%)</td>
<td>42 (17.6%)</td>
<td>70 (29.4%)</td>
<td>77 (32.4%)</td>
<td>36 (15.1%)</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>10 (4.3%)</td>
<td>23 (9.8%)</td>
<td>69 (29.5%)</td>
<td>70 (29.9%)</td>
<td>62 (26.5%)</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8

Ag-related Students’ Responses to MEIM-R Items Measuring Ethnic Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>11 (10.4%)</td>
<td>15 (14.2%)</td>
<td>42 (39.6%)</td>
<td>22 (20.8%)</td>
<td>16 (15.1%)</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>6 (5.6%)</td>
<td>5 (4.7%)</td>
<td>27 (25.2%)</td>
<td>37 (34.6%)</td>
<td>32 (29.9%)</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>6 (5.5%)</td>
<td>7 (6.4%)</td>
<td>31 (28.4%)</td>
<td>38 (34.9%)</td>
<td>27 (24.8%)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2 (1.8%)</td>
<td>14 (12.8%)</td>
<td>38 (34.9%)</td>
<td>31 (28.4%)</td>
<td>24 (22.0%)</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4 (3.6%)</td>
<td>20 (18.2%)</td>
<td>32 (29.1%)</td>
<td>34 (30.9%)</td>
<td>20 (18.2%)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>6 (5.6%)</td>
<td>10 (9.3%)</td>
<td>20 (18.7%)</td>
<td>31 (29.0%)</td>
<td>40 (37.4%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.9

Non-Ag Participant Students’ Responses to MEIM-R Items Measuring Ethnic Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>8 (7.0%)</td>
<td>15 (13.2%)</td>
<td>13 (11.4%)</td>
<td>51 (44.7%)</td>
<td>27 (23.7%)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>6 (5.3%)</td>
<td>10 (8.8%)</td>
<td>36 (31.6%)</td>
<td>33 (28.9%)</td>
<td>29 (25.4%)</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>6 (5.3%)</td>
<td>9 (8.0%)</td>
<td>34 (30.1%)</td>
<td>41 (36.3%)</td>
<td>23 (20.4%)</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>11 (9.6%)</td>
<td>12 (10.4%)</td>
<td>39 (33.9%)</td>
<td>39 (33.9%)</td>
<td>14 (12.2%)</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>6 (5.2%)</td>
<td>20 (17.4%)</td>
<td>34 (29.6%)</td>
<td>40 (34.8%)</td>
<td>15 (13.0%)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4 (3.4%)</td>
<td>11 (9.3%)</td>
<td>45 (38.1%)</td>
<td>38 (32.2%)</td>
<td>20 (16.9%)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on the MEIM-R Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean of Ag. Involved</th>
<th>Mean of Non-Involved</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Lower Difference</th>
<th>Upper Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p <0.10; **p<0.05*
Research Question Two: How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males perceive community involvement?

a. What is the quality of life of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?

Tables 4.11-4.13 show students’ responses to three items measuring quality of life grouped by the status of their involvement in agricultural-related programs. In Table 4.11, the majority of the students who were ag-involved (n=59, 53.6%) and non-involved (n=65, 55.1%) were very to somewhat satisfied with the way things were going in their own life. Table 4.12 shows that about 33% of the respondents in ag-involved (n=40, 36.0%) and non-involved (n=44, 37.3%) mentioned that school related issues and employment were two of the greatest problems youth face today. Agricultural-related students responded “depression” the single greatest challenge youth face today (n=26, 23.4%); however, non-agricultural-related respondents mentioned “violence substance abuse (n=28, 23.7%) as the single greatest problem youth face today. Table 4.13 shows an even distribution of respondents to a question related to overall condition of their community. Nearly 45% indicated the overall condition of their community as “average.”
Table 4.11  

*Students’ Responses to Question 1 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Satisfaction with Own Life</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>24 (21.8%)</td>
<td>35 (31.8%)</td>
<td>27 (24.5%)</td>
<td>18 (16.4%)</td>
<td>6 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>26 (22.0%)</td>
<td>39 (33.1%)</td>
<td>27 (22.9%)</td>
<td>12 (10.2%)</td>
<td>14 (11.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12  

*Students’ Responses to Question 2 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Greatest Problem Youth Face Today</th>
<th>School related/employment</th>
<th>Violence substance abuse</th>
<th>Social Problems</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>40 (36.0%)</td>
<td>17 (15.3%)</td>
<td>15 (13.5%)</td>
<td>26 (23.4%)</td>
<td>13 (11.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>44 (37.3%)</td>
<td>28 (23.7%)</td>
<td>21 (17.8%)</td>
<td>13 (11.0%)</td>
<td>12 (10.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.13

*Students’ Responses to Question 3 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Rating of the Condition of Living in Own Community</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG-related</td>
<td>11 (9.8%)</td>
<td>25 (22.3%)</td>
<td>49 (43.8%)</td>
<td>16 (14.3%)</td>
<td>11 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>11 (9.2%)</td>
<td>32 (26.9%)</td>
<td>56 (47.1%)</td>
<td>17 (14.3%)</td>
<td>3 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. What is the **perception of community involvement** of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?

Tables 4.14-4.16 show students’ responses to three items measuring community involvement grouped by the status of their involvement in agricultural-related programs. Results showed that a relatively large number of students who are involved ag-related programs (n=63, 57.8%) felt community involvement (n=48, 40.3%) “Somewhat” to “Very important” compared to non-ag-related program involved students. Results also showed that 33.60% of males, not involved in ag-related program responded “neutral” to questions about their perception of community involvement and whether it had “some level” or “no level of importance.” Table 4.15 shows slightly more than 40% of agricultural-related students (n=51, 44.7%) and non-involved students (n=50, 42.0%) indicated “opportunity to learn new skill and building resume” as the greatest reason for participating in volunteer or community programs.

According to Table 4.16, agricultural-related youth were slightly more likely to choose “Environmental” (n=36, 33.3%) as the type of community activities participated in the past 6 months. However, non-involved young Black males (n=45, 38.5%) chose “educational” as the type of community activity participated in the past 6 months. Almost, 20% of agricultural-related participants (n=20, 18.5%) and non-involved participants (n=22, 18.8%) indicated participating in the past 6 months in “Charitable activities.”
Table 4.14

*Students’ Responses to Question 4 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling of Being Involved in the Community</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Not too Important</th>
<th>Not Important at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>33 (30.3%)</td>
<td>30 (27.5%)</td>
<td>23 (21.1%)</td>
<td>17 (15.6%)</td>
<td>6 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>13 (10.9%)</td>
<td>35 (29.4%)</td>
<td>40 (33.6%)</td>
<td>21 (17.6%)</td>
<td>10 (8.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15

*Students’ Responses to Question 5 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest Reason for Participation in Volunteer/Community Programs</th>
<th>Requirement in School</th>
<th>Opportunity to learn new skill/build resume</th>
<th>Mandatory Community Involvement</th>
<th>Personal Satisfaction/Confidence</th>
<th>Address problems in community/care for community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>30 (26.3%)</td>
<td>51 (44.7%)</td>
<td>12 (10.5%)</td>
<td>14 (12.3%)</td>
<td>7 (6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>28 (23.5%)</td>
<td>50 (42.0%)</td>
<td>11 (9.2%)</td>
<td>17 (14.3%)</td>
<td>13 (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.16

*Students’ Responses to Question 6 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Community Activities</th>
<th>Charitable Activities</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Political Govern.</th>
<th>Religious/Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>20 (18.5%)</td>
<td>28 (25.9%)</td>
<td>36 (33.3%)</td>
<td>5 (4.6%)</td>
<td>19 (17.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>22 (18.8%)</td>
<td>45 (38.5%)</td>
<td>23 (19.7%)</td>
<td>6 (5.1%)</td>
<td>21 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. What is the knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?

The results in Tables 4.17.1-4.17.4 presents the distribution of students’ responses to four questions related to knowledge of and attitudes towards community involvement. The table also presents the means and mean difference test, t-test results for the four items by two groups: students who were involved in ag-related activities and students who were not involved in ag-related programs. Results showed significant mean differences between the two groups for questions: “I think my school system makes it point to highlight the importance of participating in community activities” (t=−2.329, p=0.021) and “I think there is a significant amount of information available regarding community service activities for youth in urban areas” (t=1.712, p=0.088).

The results in Tables 4.18.1-4.18.5 present the distribution of students’ responses to five questions related to Importance and Participation in Community Involvement. The table also presents the means and mean difference test, t-test results for the five items by two groups: students who were involved in ag-related activities and students who were not involved in ag-related programs. Results showed no significant mean differences between the two groups on these questions.
Table 4.17.1

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 7 Item 1 in the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

I think there is a strong social and cultural acceptance of being involved in the community with youth in urban areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>14 (12.7%)</td>
<td>13 (11.8%)</td>
<td>46 (41.8%)</td>
<td>21 (19.1%)</td>
<td>16 (14.5%)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.184</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>11 (9.2%)</td>
<td>13 (10.9%)</td>
<td>72 (60.5%)</td>
<td>16 (13.4%)</td>
<td>7 (5.9%)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.924</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 0.15 1.08 0.28

Table 4.17.2

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 7 Item 2 in the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

I think my school system makes it point to highlight the importance of participating in community activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>34 (31.2%)</td>
<td>23 (21.1%)</td>
<td>23 (21.1%)</td>
<td>23 (21.1%)</td>
<td>6 (5.5%)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>19 (16.0%)</td>
<td>25 (21.0%)</td>
<td>37 (31.1%)</td>
<td>29 (24.4%)</td>
<td>9 (7.6%)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05, **p<.10
Table 4.17.3

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 7 Item 3 in the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

I think there are many community service organizations that provide activities for youth to participate in my area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>13 (11.5%)</td>
<td>28 (24.8%)</td>
<td>39 (34.5%)</td>
<td>22 (19.5%)</td>
<td>11 (9.7%)</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.138</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>20 (17.1%)</td>
<td>30 (25.6%)</td>
<td>33 (28.2%)</td>
<td>30 (25.6%)</td>
<td>4 (3.4%)</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05, **p<.10

Table 4.17.4

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 7 Item 4 in the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

I think there is a significant amount of information available regarding community service activities for youth in urban areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>12 (11.5%)</td>
<td>21 (24.8%)</td>
<td>44 (34.5%)</td>
<td>28 (19.5%)</td>
<td>6 (9.7%)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>15 (17.1%)</td>
<td>8 (25.6%)</td>
<td>0 (28.2%)</td>
<td>20 (25.6%)</td>
<td>3 (3.4%)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05, **p<.10
Table 4.18.1

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 11 Item 1 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>13 (11.7%)</td>
<td>16 (14.4%)</td>
<td>35 (31.2%)</td>
<td>36 (32.4%)</td>
<td>11 (9.9%)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>17 (14.5%)</td>
<td>15 (12.8%)</td>
<td>52 (44.4%)</td>
<td>23 (19.7%)</td>
<td>10 (8.5%)</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18.2

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 11 Item 2 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>8 (7.7%)</td>
<td>10 (9.6%)</td>
<td>47 (45.2%)</td>
<td>22 (21.2%)</td>
<td>17 (16.3%)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>7 (5.9%)</td>
<td>9 (7.6%)</td>
<td>57 (48.3%)</td>
<td>31 (26.3%)</td>
<td>14 (11.9%)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.18.3

Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 11 Item 3 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>7 (6.7%)</td>
<td>7 (6.7%)</td>
<td>19 (18.1%)</td>
<td>27 (25.7%)</td>
<td>45 (42.9%)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>3 (2.6%)</td>
<td>2 (1.7%)</td>
<td>23 (20.0%)</td>
<td>41 (35.7%)</td>
<td>46 (40.0%)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18.4

Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 11 Item 4 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>15 (13.8%)</td>
<td>15 (13.8%)</td>
<td>31 (28.4%)</td>
<td>30 (25.7%)</td>
<td>18 (16.5%)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>14 (12.3%)</td>
<td>12 (10.5%)</td>
<td>43 (37.7%)</td>
<td>31 (27.2%)</td>
<td>14 (12.3%)</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.18.5

*Mean Comparison Results for Ag-Involved and Non-Involved Groups on Question 11 Item 5 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ag-related</strong></td>
<td>25 (22.9%)</td>
<td>27 (24.8%)</td>
<td>30 (27.5%)</td>
<td>19 (17.4%)</td>
<td>8 (7.3%)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Ag</strong></td>
<td>25 (21.2%)</td>
<td>37 (31.4%)</td>
<td>29 (24.6%)</td>
<td>19 (16.1%)</td>
<td>8 (6.8%)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. How do young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males perceived the importance and participation in community involvement?

Tables 4.19-4.21 present distributions of agriculture program involvement or non-involvement by students based on number of hours of involvement, reasons for non-involvement in community programs and activities, and types of community involvement preferences, respectively. Table 4.19 focuses on the number of hours students spent in the past month engaging in community involvement in their communities. The results showed a slight majority of non-ag related students (n=64, 53.8%) spent “no hours” performing community involvement.

Table 4.20 focuses on the “main reasons for non-involvement in community program activities” by two groups (ag-related and non-ag related young Black males). The results showed that a relatively large number of young Black males involved in ag-related youth programs (n=33, 29.5%) indicated that their non-involvement in community programs was due to “other extracurricular activities/sports.” On the other hand, a relatively large number of non-involved ag-related young Black males (n=46, 39.0%) responded that they “do not feel it is important or was not asked.” Table 4.21 focuses on the types of community involvement among young Black males engaged in ag-related youth programs and those not involved. The results showed that students who were involved in ag related programs (n=51, 45.5%) and those not-involved in ag-related programs (n=53, 46.1%) had similar responses regarding their “interested community program preference.”
Table 4.19  
*Students’ Responses to Question 8 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Community Involvement Performed in the Past Month</th>
<th>1-2 Hours a Month</th>
<th>3-5 Hours a Month</th>
<th>6-8 Hours a Month</th>
<th>8 or More Hours a Month</th>
<th>No Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>18 (16.4%)</td>
<td>21 (19.1%)</td>
<td>10 (9.1%)</td>
<td>13 (11.8%)</td>
<td>48 (43.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>23 (19.3%)</td>
<td>12 (10.1%)</td>
<td>8 (6.7%)</td>
<td>12 (10.1%)</td>
<td>64 (53.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.20  
*Students’ Responses to Question 9 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main reasons for non-involvement in community programs and activities</th>
<th>Family/ Parents</th>
<th>Focus on Studies</th>
<th>Other Extracurricular Activities/ Sports</th>
<th>Awareness of Opportunities</th>
<th>Do not feel it is important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>10 (8.9%)</td>
<td>27 (24.10%)</td>
<td>33 (29.5%)</td>
<td>10 (8.9%)</td>
<td>32 (28.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>10 (8.5%)</td>
<td>24 (20.3%)</td>
<td>30 (25.4%)</td>
<td>8 (6.8%)</td>
<td>46 (39.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.21

*Students’ Responses to Question 10 on the Community Involvement Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Community Involvement Preference</th>
<th>Nonprofit Organization</th>
<th>Health Service Sector</th>
<th>School System</th>
<th>Community Sports Program</th>
<th>Church/ service Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag-related</td>
<td>18 (16.1%)</td>
<td>9 (8.00%)</td>
<td>23 (20.5%)</td>
<td>51 (45.5%)</td>
<td>11 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ag</td>
<td>22 (19.1%)</td>
<td>15 (13.0%)</td>
<td>17 (14.8%)</td>
<td>53 (46.1%)</td>
<td>8 (7.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third research question, *How do the experiences of high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs differ from those of non-involved Black males within similar urban communities?*

*a. How do agricultural-related Black male youth and non-agricultural-related young Black youth feel about the agriculture-related youth development programs?*

*b. What do young Black males know about agricultural-related programs?*

*c. What themes and opinions can be identified about young Black males’ perception on agricultural-related programs?*

**Participants**

A random sample of twenty African American high school age youth participated in the focus group part of this research study across all three schools with 10 young Black students involved in agricultural-related programs and 10 young Black male students not-involved in agricultural-related programs. Various urban neighborhoods such as urban core, urban Pioneer, Suburbs, Historical areas, and Rural/Urban areas outside the cities were presented. The age of the participants was from 13-19 years old. All participants in the focus groups were in grades 9-12 in their respective schools.

*a. How do agricultural-related Black male youth and non-agricultural-related young Black youth feel about the agriculture-related youth development programs?*

**Ag-related male interest and after-school programs**

In the Urban Public Schools, A and B, students mentioned various opportunities and things that interested them. Some included: Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H Youth Development, Music Clubs, Sports, Computers, and Wildlife or Urban Gardening. The students mentioned that FFA is major in the
school and African American males do hold leadership positions. In addition, community service and flower shows are being held in-school and after-school. Participants also mentioned sports, music programs and gardening/FFA is a strong component to their participation. It is critical to mention that students, who were involved in ag-related programs, did not enroll in 4-H programs in schools but have heard of the program.

These Black young males mentioned that “friends” were a great reason why they were involved in these ag-related or extracurricular programs at their urban schools. Participants also mentioned that being involved in the community and through youth programming is good to be a including factor in change, gain more experiences, give their ideas on community planning and civic engagement, and help for elderly and other people. A participant in the focus group mentioned:

I think it's important because like it's good for people to be included in this stuff and like when you learn – like when you have like experience in things you can take that and use it for different things in life. (Urban Public-School Participant)

The students in this focus group mentioned that a “Block Captain” who is assigned as an older adult leader in the community is a great person to lead projected goals and gain exposure in certain communities for more involvement and participation by not only adults but teen youth.
Non-ag-related male interest and after-school programs

In the charter school (Non-agricultural group), students mentioned their interests were in sports (basketball), music, creative arts, fitness (YMCA), and reading. These participants mentioned that after-school they are not involved in many activities due to being tired and wanted to get away from school activities and more on things they find pleasurable. One participant mentioned,

I didn’t speak, like it didn’t speak out to me like that. The only one that spoke out to me was like basketball, video game club, chess club, but then I usually don’t have time for that because I work after-school. (Urban Charter School Participant)

The opportunities within the Urban Charter School C were art clubs, design and architecture, healthy living programs, visual journaling, and career development. Students mentioned that they did find after-school community programs and involvement important, but would be more interested in such programs if they were given a stipend, had more time to participate, and activities were structured and interesting.

b. What do young Black males know about agricultural-related programs?

Students’ knowledge of ag-related programs

Participants discussed their perception and knowledge of agricultural-related programs. Those students who participated in such programs mentioned that the programs are related to showing youth different opportunities within the field of agriculture with its business, plant life, gardening, dairy, animal science, and even maintaining farm land. A participant involved in agricultural-related programs noted:
Okay, for agricultural uses they do teach us about business in agriculture how you can – how the plant system works, how you can buy certain plants and stuff like that. Then you are given information about life – plant life and all that. (Urban Public-School Participant)

Researcher note: In the agricultural-related focus group, students had experiences with FFA programs and LEAF programs. LEAF program was a paid internship that was environmental and students learned about farm land and their environment. Students were given access to and an opportunity to offer an opinion on FFA planning activities within the school through surveys.

Students not involved in agricultural-related programs said that their knowledge of agricultural-related programs focused on farming and raising crops. The participants also mentioned agriculture involving food and that their parents watch the “food network channel” in trying to learn more cooking experiences and tips. Despite students’ non-involvement in agricultural-related programs, the Urban Charter School C offered a 4-H cooking and healthy living program in which students said they would be interested – this was in part due to students’ indication that if such programs were offered, they would be more engaged in them. One participant in the non-agricultural-related group mentioned,

Because yes there is a lot of clubs and extra curriculum activities but then again, they are not going to try it it's because they don't spark of a lot of people’s interest. (Urban Charter School Participant)

However, students mentioned sports, music, and arts to be of interest to urban African American young males. Students also stated hanging out with friends and riding bikes are enjoyable activities for them after school.
Researcher note: I noted that in the non-agricultural-related focus group, students stated they had never been camping or engaged in many outdoor activities, but would love to just to get away from their urban city for a while.

c. What themes and opinions can be identified about young Black males’ perception on agricultural-related programs?

Discovering Themes

The process of identifying themes involved, reading the transcripts and then coding them. Then statements were placed in each theme as meaning units. Table 4.16 contains a listing of themes and meaning units. Five primary themes were identified through analysis of focus groups. They are: communication of opportunities, influences, barriers to participate, views on ethnic identity, and programming structure interests/activities. These findings describe the participant’s opinion about opportunities provided to young Black males for agricultural-related programs, relationships through mentoring and community involvement, barriers to participation in agricultural or extracurricular programs, and opinions on being a young African American male today.

Theme One: Communication of Opportunities

Participants indicated that a reason for the decrease in participation is the lack of communication of opportunities about agricultural-related programs. Participants’ described communication of opportunities in several ways-through awareness of after-school programs, interest in current programs, teachers in the school system, and the location of certain agricultural-related programs. The question on their opinion about the opportunities provided to young Black males in agricultural-related youth programs or other after-school programs led, participants to respond:
I feel like it is but people just don't want to do it like maybe because it is not what they like. (Non-Ag participant)

Participants cited interest and having their friends as another reason for participation in agricultural-related programs. Sports was also another component as one high school age Black male involved in ag-related programs responded,

Like if I – like for me like if I have an interest in the program – like if it sounds like something that I would do or something new or cool that I think I could. (Ag-Related Participant)

Location with these programs also was another strong meaning that flowed through the focus groups. Several participants meant school hours range from 8:30am to 2:30pm and difficulty with inner-city bus schedule being an issue to stay after-school for agricultural or extracurricular programs. One high school age young Black male involved in agricultural-related programs mentioned,

I think it has to be in our urban area. (Ag-Related Participant)

**Theme Two: Influences**

The *influences* high school age Black males have towards participating on agricultural-related or after-school programs was emphasized in the focus groups. Participants communicated what *influences* meant for them in terms of *mentoring*, *service* in the community, and *family* support. Some of the high school age males emphasized the relationships among peers and building each other up as well as teachers and father figures showing them the way and tips for the future. One participant who did not participate in ag-related programs mentioned:
People look up to teachers more than their parents or someone that is actually like physically in their life. People look up to more, people they never even met before. (Non-Ag Participant)

Participants also noted that school activities that involve service to the community add a special component to their interest and success. One ag-related high school age participant responded:

Sometimes it's just negative like sometimes people don’t appreciate the effort that you put in and they uh they view it as like oh he has to do it because of whatever reason instead of like viewing it as uh me actually doing it because I wanted to.

(Ag-Related Participant)

Other participants noted that influences also come from parents and family support. Participants mentioned parents as leaders in some after-school programs and sports clubs in the neighborhoods. One non-ag related participant mentioned:

My father. Well he retired, but he helped kids tutor -- he used to be a teacher and I’m thinking about being a teacher too. But kids out here now, I'm thinking about it, I'm changing my own opinion about it. Some of them are nice but some of them are very ignorant, they um take teachers for granted and stuff like that.

(Non-Ag Participant)

Theme Three: Barriers to Participation

Specific factors contributed to non-involvement by participants in the non-participant focus group. Some non-participant high school age males noted their negative
experiences in school caused them not to be involved in after-school programs of any kind. One agricultural-related high school age Black male mentioned:

Like sometimes people that you don’t get along with, I probably won't like that or it would just take away from the positive that is that situation. (Ag-Related Participant)

Some other ag-related participants mentioned that the cost of certain programs and activities can limit their continued involvement. Most participants mentioned that if their parents were aware of certain programs and interests, they would push for them to be involved. One agricultural-related high school age Black male mentioned:

I mean Yeah, you can apply but that costs money that I'm not spending, that’s like $100 something sometimes you know. (Ag-Related Participant)

The non-involved participant focus group often cited knowledge of ag programs and lack of interest in known programs and agriculture in general. In addition, getting friends and classmates to participate could increase their participation in certain activities after-school. Another barrier to participation were racial stereotype threat incidents and low funding from the school system to increase interest and program instruction compared to other privileged schools in similar urban settings. A non-participant high school age Black male responded their school:

I feel like it's definitely harder, like our situations are like living where we live, our schools are not being funded enough, like in those terms Yeah, but not like racism as like I'm like, like a white person like calling me out of my name or something like that, not that way. (Non-Ag Participant)
Theme Four: Views on Ethnic Identity

Participants indicated that views on ethnic identity were influenced by differences and experiences in educational program participation in-school and after-school. Stereotypes and perceptions of certain programs were brought up in the focus groups by many high school age Black males. A participant involved in ag-related programs responded on his experience in FFA programs:

I can say from my experience um with the whole music program there wasn’t really to me Black people in it. So, like when I went to go do like piano stuff like perform for other people I did get kind of stares because I was Black. Because most of the people working with me were like white or Hispanic, so seeing me there I got like more stares and more comments than other people. (Ag-Related Participant)

Participants were asked for their opinion on being a young Black male in today’s society and many noted their morals and pride in their race. Some participants focused on what it meant to be a man and how support from family and friends led to their success. One of the non-involved high school age Black male responded:

That is true, it means like, it means like everybody is trying to make it, everybody wants to get out, everybody wants to get out of their neighborhood and everybody you know wants to be a rapper or a ball player or a football player makes you work hard, makes you look at things differently, rather than -- it's not like let me help this person, I mean sometimes it is like let me help this person if the society didn’t do it, then other times it's like well it's every man for themselves. I'm
trying to get out so I can make -- so I can help my family out. (Non-Ag Participant)

Theme Five: Programs/Structure/Activities of Interest

A very strong theme that emerged from the focus groups included the actual programs organizational structure and many activities embedded in specific programs. Program structure and activities of interest were articulated through student’s interest, youth voice, and intriguing educational fields. Some participants noted business, entrepreneurship, music and technology as educational fields of interest. Creative writing and drawing also were areas of program curriculum and instruction by high school age Black male youth. Community service was also a strong theme - Black males enjoy giving back to their community in structured school service event and activities. One ag-related participant mentioned:

Like stuff I don’t know like not like almost like volunteering or like with helping people, I get satisfaction of, of like helping people. (Ag-Related Participant)
Table 4.22

*Themes and Meaning Units*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Meaning Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication of Opportunities</td>
<td>Awareness, after-school programs, interest, peers, teachers, location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences</td>
<td>Mentoring, School Activities, Importance on Community, Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to Participation</td>
<td>Interest, Stress, Negative School, Experiences, Lack of Peer, Involvement, Knowledge of Ag programs, Obligations, Parent Awareness, Low School, Funding, Program Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>Differences, Pride, Morals, Interests, Stereotype/Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs/Structure/Activities of Interest</td>
<td>Sports, Hands-on learning activities, stipends, business and life skills, entrepreneurship, service in own, music and technology, Food, Accessibility, Youth Voice</td>
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</tbody>
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Chapter 5
Discussion, Conclusion, & Recommendations

This study aimed to investigate ethnic identity development, community involvement, and experiences of African American high school males and these influence their participation in agricultural-related youth programs. Young Black high school males ages 13-18 in urban areas attending agricultural-related high schools in Pennsylvania, were asked about their affiliation with their ethnic group, involvement in their communities, and agricultural-related and after-school experiences. The results of this study will be provided to educators, extension, urban school officials, and agricultural-related state leaders to assist with developing and planning of innovative youth development programs that meets the needs of youth and their interests.

The research was grounded in three specific research questions:

1. How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males self-identify as measured by the (revised) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R)?

   a. What similarities emerge from young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs activity compared to non-involved Black males?

   b. What differences emerge from young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs activity compared to non-involved Black males?
2. How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males perceive community involvement as measured by the Community involvement questionnaire?

   a. What is the quality of life of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?
   
   b. What is the perception of community involvement of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?
   
   c. What is the knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement of young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males?
   
   d. How do young Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs compared to non-involved Black males perceived the importance and participation in community involvement?

3. How do the experiences of high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs differ from those of non-involved Black males within similar urban communities?

   a. How do agricultural-related Black male youth and non-agricultural-related young Black youth feel about the agricultural-related youth development programs?
   
   b. What do young Black males know about agricultural-related programs?
   
   c. What themes and opinions can be identified about young Black males’ perception on agricultural-related programs?
Chapter one presented a foundation for the research topic and problems discovered among young Black males in urban settings. Limited involvement in 4-H programs by young Black youth are based on economic backgrounds, skill development, academic achievement, awareness, and even interest in agricultural-related programs. Chapter two offered a review of the literature on Black male youth in urban communities, inclusion, ethnic identity, educational attainment, and community after-school involvement. Specific literature on agricultural-related youth programs and influential factors was reviewed as well. Most importantly, this review of literature addressed the theoretical context of the study, based on Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of Human Development, the Ecodevelopmental Theory, the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, and a conceptual framework and model for understanding the strengths of Black youth.

Chapter three presented the methodology, focused on an overview of the research design, sites selected, sampling method, procedures for data collection, instruments, and data analysis. Chapter four provided findings from the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), community involvement questionnaire, and experiences and perspectives from focus group questions. This study reflects input from 255 African American high school age males in urban agricultural-related schools in Pennsylvania. The focus groups were engaged to gather detailed responses on perceptions of agricultural-related programs and knowledge of certain programs. Therefore, additional details were provided about attitudes, beliefs, and experiences after-school among young Black males. The quantitative data helped to answer the questions of this study, identify differences and similarities of ethnic identity, provided the basis for youth development
programs modifications, and opportunities for future research. Chapter five provides a brief recap findings for research questions. It also explains the implications of socio-demographic status of participants. Then, findings on Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory, the Ecodevelopmental theory, the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, and the strengths of understanding Black youth were discussed. Finally, chapter five cites implications for future research and practice.

Young African American high school males who participate in agricultural-related programs compared to non-involved males demonstrate significant differences related to socioeconomic status, programs in which involved, ethnic identity, perceptions of community involvement, and after-school experiences. In addition, grade, location, and an overall participant parent school level and future career play a factor. Young Black males who participated in agricultural-related programs were more likely to engage in programs being offered in-school such as FFA or horticulture. However, students in agricultural-related programs are involved but still perceive barriers while participating in certain programs. Martin and Kitchel (2014) noted barriers in FFA that included family issues, neighborhood areas, and the structure of the agricultural program. Focus groups indicated several themes such as communication of opportunities, influences, barriers to participation, views on ethnic identity, and program structure/activities of interest.

Results showed a difference in distribution between students in urban neighborhood and ag-related involvement status and non-agricultural-related youth residing outside a major city in rural/urban areas. If these non-agricultural-related youths are not involved in programs but live closer to an agricultural setting, what are the
reasons? Could programs be focused in the heart of the major urban areas and distance and location plays a factor? Could the timing of certain programs be an issue with students staying after-school to participate? In addition, the results showed that non-agricultural-related student’s parents education tended to be higher in graduate degrees compared to agricultural-related young Black males. Table 4.6 showed that agricultural-related participants’ parent’ education was highest at the high school degree level compared to non-agricultural-related young Black males.

**Research Question 1.** *How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males self-identify as measured by the revised Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R)?*

The Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure revised (MEIM-R) focusing on ethnic identity showed that young Black males learning about their ethnic group, gaining more information on history and traditions, and feeling of a strong attachment towards their own ethnic group were significant variables. The reliability (Cronbach alpha) of scales measuring ethnic identity calculated to be .702, which was good. The mean scores for strong sense of belonging, ethnic membership, finding out more on ethnic group, and talking to other people showed no significant difference. However, significant differences were present between young Black males participating in agricultural-related programs and those not involved in understanding their own ethnic identity and attachment to own ethnic group. The data focusing on student’s responses to MEIM-R items measuring ethnic identity showed that students spend time trying to find out about their ethnic group. Belgrave and Brevard (2015) discussed racial identity being viewed as how a youth views, identifies, and connects to a certain racial group. Racial and ethnic
identity is an important factor in understanding young Black males. In the focus groups participants responded to the question of “perception of being a Black male today,” respondents mentioned (1) race being a part of their everyday life, (2) the feelings of pride and (3) being your own person but gives affirmation and the push to work harder due to their race. On the other hand, some participants mentioned that their ethnic and racial identity sometimes causes stereotype and negative perceptions in agricultural-related program environments; not acting or looking like others participating from other ethnic backgrounds is an issue. Why are young Black are males participating in agricultural-related programs feeling a sense of belonging to their own ethnic group, but not a sense of belonging to their agricultural-related program? Are these males given opportunities like other youth in leadership positions?

The findings from this research question reflect other studies in which African American youth develop and understand their identity through reduction of risk behaviors and engagement in healthy living and family (Brittian, 2012). Parents and family are an essential factor in the lives of young Black high school male youth. Family discussion, parent leadership, and family exposure influences young Black males to identify ethnically and racially (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). Rogers, Scott, and Way (2015) noted that young Black males’ social identities can determine the level of importance and attachment. Shabazz (2016) indicated that young Black males find out more about their ethnic identity through social interactions at African American barbershops. These barbershops provide culture-specific history, dialogue on issues revolving around the community, and male bonding (Shabazz, 2016). However, are young Black males obtaining more information about their ethnic identity at home or at school? Are
educators and leaders in communities prepared to navigate instruction to fulfill a gap in the lives of these African American male youth? The African American church is also a platform for young Black male discovery of their own race. The Black church serves as not only a religious atmosphere but a place to educate African Americans on social topics relating to race and inequality, ethnic identity, family structure, and opportunities to gain a sense of belonging (Moore, Adedoyin, Robinson & Boamah, 2015). In addition, young Black males who are involved in Black churches can gain a sense of attachment to male role models and father figures who serve as mentors and leaders in their life.

Agricultural-related young Black males in the study reported feeling a strong attachment to their own ethnic group more than those non-involved young Black males. When asked about their feeling of strong attachment to their own ethnic group, 132 (56.4%) felt a strong attachment to their own ethnic group and 33 (14.1%) respondents reported not having strong feelings of attachment to their ethnic group. Tables 4.8 and 4.9 presented the responses of students to the ethnic identity measure according to the two groups (Ag-related and Non-Ag-related). This would indicate that, students participating in certain programs actually have a stronger attachment to their own ethnic group than students who do not participate. Why is this so? Do these agricultural-related programs offer young Black males opportunities to connect with mentors, friends, supportive and nurturing adults who share the same ethnic background and beliefs?

The Ecodevelopmental Theory is a framework that extends Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory focusing on the social environment of youth and parent interaction (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). The current study reported that agricultural-related youth feel a strong attachment to their own ethnic group compared to non-involved young
Black males; these findings can be viewed within the *microsystem* of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, explaining that interactions between the child and friends or family could enhance more participation and involvement in activities or programs and an exploration. The Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) is another framework used in this study. This also extends Bronfenbrenner's ecological model that focuses on the youth's cultural environment (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). The PVEST theory’s 2nd level on stress engagement can take into account agricultural-related participants’ confrontation of experiences with stress and struggles as teenagers compared to non-involved young males who do not have a strong attachment to their identity. Another level within the PVEST theory focuses on emergent identity, or how youth cope with life’s circumstances (Crockett & Carol, 2016). Non-agricultural-related youth participants could have limited attachment to their own ethnic identity by not involving in certain groups and having an unclear view of their own personal identity, compared to those agricultural-related young Black males who are gaining a sense of belonging and inclusion that helps to shape their identity in structured educational programs in-school and after-school, based on the study findings. A study by Henfield (2012) utilized the PVEST theory to explore young Black males’ experiences within their environment that develop long-term behaviors. Young Black males who are not participating in agricultural-related youth programs could increase their motivation to become involved if actions are taken to enhance culturally relevant activities and teacher training on understanding masculine identities (Henfield, 2012). Are non-agricultural-related students obtaining the same experiences as agricultural-related youth in exploring their ethnic identity within the same structure of programming among programs offered?
Future research will have to examine the actual opportunities and resources offered to non-involved agricultural-related young Black males in other extracurricular and educational programs in urban areas. Increasing academic achievement and healthy living practices could be produced by incorporating ethnic identity and racial pride in the school systems as well as in agricultural-related programs (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). This could lead more young Black males to participate and feel a strong sense of belonging not only to their ethnic group; but to the actual agricultural-related program.

**Research Question Two.** How do high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-involved Black males perceive community involvement?

The community involvement questionnaire (Appendix B) included some questions from the Wirthlin Group (1995) questionnaire on the Prudential Spirit of Community Youth Survey: A Survey of High School Students on Community Involvement. The questionnaire focused on participant’s perceptions and experiences in community involvement programs. The instrument consisted of a Likert-type scale that focused on items on quality of life, perception of community involvement, knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement, and importance and participation with community involvement. The reliability (Cronbach alpha) of scales measuring community involvement had a coefficient alpha of .378, so knowledge and attitudes indicated low reliability. In addition, the coefficient alpha of .623 indicated that the reliability of scales measuring importance and participation with community involvement could be acceptable. The study also presented other interesting findings. The study showed that for young Black high school males, urban setting or
neighborhood and student satisfaction with their lives are not independent. Specifically, students from historical neighborhood settings tend to be less satisfied with their lives compared to students from other urban settings.

**Quality of Life.** Results in this study also indicated that both agricultural-related young Black males and those who are non-involved in agricultural-related programs feel satisfied with the way things are going in their own life. Compared to studies (Colvin, 1991; Love, 2014; Zamani-Gallaher & Polite, 2010) that point to young Black males going through circumstances and struggles throughout their life, this current study’s findings showed that among these circumstances and socio-economic status, young Black males still are satisfied with the way things are going in their life. Agricultural-related young Black males and non-agricultural-related young Black males reported that the single greatest problem youth face today is “school related issues and employment.” McMahon et al (2016), discussed social and academic inclusion as a factor in problems faced by young Black males in the school system. These school related issues could revolve around discrimination in school settings, low funding, teacher unpreparedness, peer pressure, and even racial or ethnic stereotype (Nicholas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008). Are these young Black males struggling with problems or circumstances in their community that can affect their achievement and success in school and after-school? In addition, are we as educators preparing our young Black males to be prepared for the workforce and seek employment or other educational related experiences? Black male youth are affected by high school dropout, crime and incarceration, poor access to higher education, gender identity, and overrepresentation in special education
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model can be utilized to explore factors relating to young Black males’ responses to the greatest problem youth face today: “school-related issues and employment.” Onwuegbuzie, Collins, and Frels (2013) noted that the microsystem layer within Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model involving the direct environment where the child interacts in school or local neighborhood could be a factor in their involvement with youth development programs offered. Harris, Hines, Kelly, Williams, and Bagley (2014) reported multiple settings in school and home that can influence young Black males’ education. Parental involvement can be essential in the development of young Black males. Harris, Hines, Kelly, Williams, and Bagley (2014) mentioned parental involvement can assist youth with improving their success in school, battling behavioral problems, mentoring, and one-on-one talks with the student-teachers.

Perception of Community Involvement. Another important focus in the results was the perception of community involvement among young Black males participating in agricultural-related programs compared to those who are not involved. The findings determined that young Black male youth who are active participants in agricultural-related programs feel that community involvement is important compared to young Black males who do not participate in agricultural-related programs. Fredricks and Eccles (2008) stated that by participating in school-based clubs and organizations, all young people have the chance to build academic and leadership skills needed for their future. Agricultural-related programs offer “citizenship” as a focus within their programs. Maintaining civic engagement, service within the community, civic education about governmental processes and structure, leadership
and character development all play a major role in developing youth’s full potential within agricultural-related programs (National 4-H Council, 2017). Community organizations focused on service are often a place that youth can become engaged in and have a voice to make a change in their community. Some of the agricultural organizations in which can be involved include could be FFA, 4-H, and urban gardening programs in these urban settings. What other community-focused programs are offered to youth who do not participate in agricultural-related programs? Hibert (2000) mentioned that urban youth who are involved in community youth organizations discover a sense of identity and connection with their community. Certain civic groups and activities aroused in the study were Upward Bound programs, youth church groups, non-profit groups like the YMCA and Salvation Army, and Habitat for Humanity (Hibert, 2000). A study by Jones, Bibbins, and Henderson (1993) reported on mentoring and community involvement among young Black males and gaining support from Black fraternities and other groups. Are agricultural-related programs partnering with other programs that urban youth find of interest or focusing on the uplift of similar urban settings?

Hibert (2000) mentioned extracurricular activities and community focused programs can shape the future of young urban males through experiences and understanding of how young Black male self-identify. Henson, Larson, and Dworkin (2003) examined African American high school age males’ interest in after-school programs; “sports” was determined to be the greatest component. Sports and music can serve as a connection for youth, parents, schools, and the community. Other community youth programs in which non-agricultural-related young Black males
could be involved could include Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy’s and Girl’s clubs, Boy Scouts, Afrocentric rites-of-passage programs, Manhood programs, African American young men leadership council, urban league programs, and even work force unemployment prevention programs (Mincy, 1994). Other related programs that fit with student interests and give young Black males a sense of belonging as well as a chance to give back to their community are called strong African American families programs the, *Aban Aya youth project* is focused on social development and school-community development; Brotherhood projects like; *The Boys Forum* which is focused on masculine-identity and development; *Brothers of Ujima*, which focuses on a cultural lenses that is structured to give young Black males support on ethnic identity and problematic behavior which offers a physical opportunity to learn self-discipline; and Black male leadership programs and coping and support, which also help Black male youth in urban areas increase their life skills and citizenship experiences through structured activities focused on building academic achievement (Belgrave & Brevard, 2015). These programs offer more guidance on building and developing young Black males to understand academic advancement, employment and career readiness, leadership development, prevention and identity formation, cultural knowledge including arts and music, sports, and mentoring. The Strengths-based model for Black youth is incorporated in most of the above mentioned programs focusing on understanding the qualities of young Black males and preparing programs that can build their awareness on society, community, social and family problems, and racial socialization (Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypek, & DeSilva, 2008).
Knowledge and attitudes toward community involvement. Based on study findings, young Black male students involved in agricultural-related youth programs and non-agricultural-related young Black male students only differ by their knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement. Students who do not participate in agricultural-related programs are in more in agreement with thinking that their school system highlights the importance of participating in community activities. If the school system is highlighting the importance of such agricultural-related youth programs involving community participation, why are some young Black males not participating? Could certain community functions or events not be of interest to young Black males? Woodland (2008) stated that urban youth community programs are based on the focus on socioeconomic issues that plague young Black males in their community. Unemployment, single-parent households, violence and drug activity, parents of children having to work more jobs and longer hours, and increases in criminal activity during after-school hours are some issues that arise in urban settings (Woodland, 2008). However, could these agricultural-related youth programs be marketed and highlighted to more academic advanced students compared to those young Black male students who seem to demonstrate disruptive behavior? Belgrave and Brevard (2015) mentioned some teachers and school staff could have negative thoughts and discriminate against some young Black males due to disruptive behavior, low academic achievement, and a lack of cultural instruction training. Young Black males who do not participate in agricultural-related programs could also be involved in other community activities or programs that are not known. On the other hand, students who are in agricultural-related programs are more likely to agree
that a significant amount of information is available regarding community service activities for youth in urban areas. A study by Francois, Overstreet, and Cunningham (2011) reported that 206 low-income urban young Black male youth who participated in community youth programs demonstrated better outcomes academically compared to young Black male youth who did not participate. In the current study both groups (ag-related and non-ag-related) seemed to be aware of community service activities; however, young Black male students who participate in agricultural-related programs are more aware of these community involved programs in their urban setting. Non-involved agricultural-related young Black male students locate more information about community activities through their schools system. However, the results showed that agricultural-related and non-agricultural-related young Black male students seem not to differ in their responses to questions related to importance and participation in community involvement.

**Importance and participation with community involvement.** Importance and participation focused on three aspects: (1) number of community hours participated within the past month, (2) main reason why not involved in community youth programs, (3) and preference of youth community involvement organizations. The results showed that young Black males’ students who are involved in ag-related programs and those involved in agricultural-related programs are similar in their responses regarding their importance and participation with community involvement.

Both groups (ag-related and non-ag-related) spent little to no significant amount of time in community involvement programs and activities. Why is this so? Why do some young Black males feel that being involved in the community is not
important? Reasons could include parental guidance and knowledge of certain community youth programs and activities, the socioeconomic environment or neighborhood of the community young Black males reside in, lack of role model or mentor support on the positive reasons for involved in youth leadership and community programs, and even other motivational factors such as friends or peers in school not participating or having an interest in certain programs and community groups.

**Research Question Three.** How do the experiences of high school age Black males involved in agricultural-related youth programs differ from those of non-involved Black males within similar urban communities?

**Feelings about the agricultural-related youth development programs.** The results from the focus groups indicated fewer differences in knowledge and perceptions of agricultural-related programs by young Black males compared to young Black males who do not participate in agricultural-related programs. Students who were involved in agricultural programs mentioned Future Farmers of America (FFA) as agricultural program in which most were engaged. Community service and flower shows were reported to be of interest. However; timeframe, program structure, curriculum interest, and mentoring seem to be constant barriers to the perceptions of students who participate in agricultural-related programs. Another interesting point within the focus group with students who participate in agricultural-related programs was the lack of knowledge about 4-H youth development programs. Students pointed out that the 4-H after-school program is not advertised in the school very well and does not align with young Black male current interests. The non-agricultural-related
young Black male group reported that some of the youth development programs in which they had participated were design and architecture, healthy living programs, and art clubs.

**Knowledge of agricultural-related programs.** Overall the young Black males in the current study mentioned various indicators of what they thought agricultural-related programs offered. Most students mentioned various opportunities to learn new curricular areas within agriculture, such as gardening, animal science, and business. Surprisingly, young Black males who were not participants in agricultural-related programs mentioned programs that involved aspects of agriculture focusing on farming and raising crops. Students also mentioned that their parents had an interest in cooking and healthy living and would be interested in participating in agricultural-related programs tailored on that. Can educators develop these programs to meet the interests of non-agricultural-related young Black males and include their parents in an adult-youth healthy living program in urban settings?

**Themes and opinions identified about young Black males’ perception on agricultural-related programs.** Several themes and points were taken from both focus groups in the current study. Participants focused more on *communication of opportunities, influences, barriers to participation, views on ethnic identity,* and *programming structure and activities* in after-school agricultural-related youth programs. Young Black males felt that marketing and awareness of these agricultural-related programs within their school system and peer excitement or current programs would increase involvement. In addition, young Black males who participated in agricultural-related programs were interested in learning about more opportunities
through in-school programming compared to programs after-school. Are school officials and teachers reaching out to program educators to meet the needs and interests of their young Black male students? What is the relationship between urban agricultural schools and agricultural-related programs in urban settings? A study by Smith and Baggett (2012) reported agricultural enrollment barriers that included lack of understanding of opportunities within the agricultural field, lack of contact with agricultural-related program educators and directors, lack of experiences on the farm, and overall disinterest in agriculture.

Influences are also an important factor in young Black males’ involvement in agricultural-related programs or other extracurricular activities. Students reported that these influences have come via mentoring from older adults and teachers, classroom outreach assignments and service events, and family motivation. A study by Phelps, Henry, and Bird (2012) explored the influences youth decision to participate in the national FFA program. The findings indicated that youth are involved in this agricultural-related program (National FFA Organization) due to (1) encouragement from others, (2) personal gain and benefits, (3) social interaction with youth that have same interests, and (4) experiences outside of school where fun is involved and opportunities to gain sense of accomplishment (Phelps, Henry, & Bird, 2012). Students who were not involved in this particular agricultural-related program mentioned (1) negative perception of the program and about agriculture, (2) apathy and interest into the program based on usefulness of participating in the program, (3) timeframe and scheduling of the program within school hours due to sports and employment (Phelps, Henry, & Bird, 2012).
The current study also classified some barriers to involvement by young Black males in agricultural-related programs. Barriers included lack of interest in agricultural-related programs, stress in school and at home, negative school experiences, lack of friends participating in programs, other obligations, parent awareness of programs, lack of funding for increased costs of programs and activities, employment. These findings relate to a study by Martin and Kitchel (2014) who discovered that friends, family, school, and community related issues were barriers to participation in an agricultural-related program such as FFA. Family responsibilities and lack of interest can be a major factor in urban youth not participating in certain programs as well (Martin & Kitchel, 2014).

Ethnic identity also was also an interesting theme in the focus group that focused on what it meant to be proud to be an African American male in today's society. Young Black males who participate in agricultural-related programs mentioned a “weird vibe” from participating in programming events and not seeing youth who look like them. The climate and recruitment in the interest of diversity within agricultural youth programs is essential to retaining the young Black males who are active participants and those who are not involved. Participants also mentioned that agricultural-related programs should reflect the interest of young Black males and other urban youth. In addition, the structure of programs should include more hands-on activities, business and life skills for urban youth, more community service opportunities to give back to their community, incorporating young Black male’s interest into program curriculum adding music and technology and/or STEM. Woodland (2008) stated that promising programs for young Black
males include extracurricular activities involving arts, sports, and tutoring. Mentoring and culturally relevant programs of interest should also be embedded in certain agricultural-related youth programs to provide youth support and direction under supervision and time with supportive adults while learning about their culture and life skills (Woodland, 2008).

**Recommendations**

It was previously indicated that obtaining positive youth development programming for urban youth continues to be a difficult process. This study showed several important predictors of ethnic identity, community involvement, and extracurricular experiences among young Black males involved in agricultural-related programs and non-involved young Black males. Students who had a stronger attachment to their own ethnic group and shared experiences working to help their communities were involved in agricultural-related programs compared to those not involved. In-school agricultural-related programs still continue to benefit more African American high school age males; however, due to barriers that include transportation and timeframe, lack of interest in certain agricultural-related youth programs, knowledge of programs, and parent interaction in these programming models of hands on educational instruction, young Black males can continue to be precluded from participation.

**Implications for Future Research**

The focus of future research on this topic should be explored in several ways. First, researchers should focus attention on what other agricultural-related programs are offered not only to African American youth but with other urban groups. In addition, exploring the relationship between agricultural-related programs and urban
neighborhoods could be a great topic. Second, a case study approach that involved collecting qualitative interview data from African American young males would aid in gaining a better understanding of ways to communicate more about their ethnic group. What programs, resources, educational components could assist them in understanding more about ethnic group?

A third area of future research would be to explore what program structures and learning styles fit the needs of young Black males through a more in-depth research design including face to face interviews and focus groups with parents and teachers from agricultural-related youth and those not involved in agricultural-related programs. If these young Black males do not have a strong attachment to their own community or to their ethnic group, where do they gain this exposure? In addition, how can we as researchers and educators bring cultural relevance in the classroom and in agricultural-related in-school/after-school programs? Are we training and preparing our volunteers and educators on knowledge of these urban areas and youth? Is a positive representation of African American adults serving as leaders embedded in agricultural-related youth programs? A final area of future research should focus on how educators, extension leadership, and administration can engage more parent involvement in understanding the vital role they play in their child’s academic and social achievements. What type of skills do African American male youth need to be successful and be positive contributors to their community? What other community outreach youth programs could agricultural-related educators partner with and gain support from?
Implications for Practice

Implications from the study are apparent to the work of agricultural-related program educators and Cooperative Extension. Current studies focus on the needs for programming in urban areas, but do not fully explain ways in which the interest and recruitment of such programs can be a factor in the eyes of young Black males in urban settings. This study’s findings support the current literature by showing the barriers to participation and need of newly effective programming methods in urban areas. The current study also shows that youth in agricultural-related youth programs are gaining some positive experiences by participating in certain programs compared to those who are not involved. Agricultural-related program educators and administration as well as 4-H Youth Development extension leaders will benefit from the results of this study by learning about young Black males’ views on ethnic identity, perception of youth community involvement and level of involvement in specific communities, and interest in after-school and extracurricular experiences.

First, educators and program planners should provide more leadership opportunities for young Black males. This could help with stereotype threat and negative perceptions of young Black males who are known as a threat to society. Second, Black youth should build certain skills in areas of interest to them. Extension programs are developed and planned based on the needs of the community; however, when do educators take the next step to include more on urban youth academic and social interests, aspirations, and self-need in the development of education of programs in urban settings? In the current study, all participants (ag-related and non-ag-related participants) mentioned music, sports, technology, STEM, business, and entrepreneurship, showing
their interest and expectations currently in life. Third, exploring more urban partnerships in urban areas can foster an understanding and appreciation for different economic circumstances African American male youth may encounter. Educators should consider national youth-serving agencies, independent agencies, minority community agencies such as the Congress of National Black Churches, National Urban League, Boys and Girls Club of America, Big Brothers and Sisters, Black fraternities and sororities, and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs). These groups could increase the development and recruitment of volunteers within the programs offered.

Another important practice would be to explore how educators can understand the key values in the lives of African American youth. Extension and agricultural educators should conduct more trainings, awareness, and discussions on understanding the role they play in the lives of African American males and gaining more insight into particular key values for this audience in urban settings. Another question to include is: what are young Black males’ student’s challenges at home? Practitioners should develop programs and strategies that assist both parents and African American youth to explore a wide range of educational opportunities and career choices. Conducting more student and adult partnerships would assist in understanding the needs of both the child and parent. Understanding the family structure of these young Black males and ways to cope with such are also essential in meeting the needs of this particular urban audience. Innovative programs on student’s interest should always be considered in planning in urban planning. Programs should be developed to help young Black males become challenged to make sense of situations they will encounter in life and in agricultural-related
programs. Another point: what benefits can young Black males gain from these types of experiences? Other implications for practice could include:

- Hire and train more leadership, administration, and volunteers that have common interest and support for young Black males including mentors, role models, etc. Understanding the relationships between the top-down approach and how more diversity is presented in these agricultural-related programming structure.

- Form more advisory councils in communities focused on common topics of interest relating to the needs of the community. Connections to family, school and community culture should be identified. Educators should use younger Black males at the planning table and give them a voice in creating change in their community. In addition, educators should also partner and recruit more urban organizations that have similar goals and objectives to meet the needs of these males in urban communities.

- Assist Black male youth develop on-going relationships with successful adult-Black males. Extension and agricultural-related educators should recruit more positive role models for these young Black males in local and statewide adult Black males serving in occupations of interest by young Black males.

- Develop agricultural-related programs that help Black male youth learn and practice skills for overcoming developmental, socio-economic obstacles that reside in certain urban schools and neighborhoods. Partnering with local social services, and non-profit organizations focusing on economic development and youth activism should be explored.
• Incorporate Euro-centric cultural principles in agricultural-related programs. Programming models that could be used in program development could include rites of passage (ROP). These cultural methods could be very important to young Black males in learning and exploring more about their ethnic identity. It could be useful for other youth to learn more about urban and diverse populations. Incorporating more in-school discussions and programs on more cultural topics could assist these males in understanding of their own racial and ethnic identity.

• Assist young Black males in understanding the needs in their community and ways they can take more of a positive approach to create change. Recruit young Black males who are in sports and extracurricular clubs by utilizing service learning agenda ideas to help them explore ways to improve their urban communities.

• Develop Manhood training/male academy programs for the curriculum and program structure to recruit young Black males. Programs should be more than a few days a week and include weekends. Certain components could be father to son program, male study groups, male retreats, and dress for success days, etc. Examples of programs are the Louis Armstrong Manhood Development Program, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois Manhood Development Programs. Programs could include cultural awareness, mentoring/role models, and career/employment readiness based on students’ interest.

• Assist Extension educators in understanding matching-fund grants and how they are used. It can be difficult to gain more funds for the implementation of programs in urban settings; however, this could benefit state agricultural-related
recruitment of funding sources. The United Way and other private and non-profits would be a benefit. Extension specialists should create more trainings and support in urban settings and develop successful proposals for funding to support innovative future urban programs for young Black males.

- Build and maintain relationships with corporate officers by getting help to encourage corporate and community foundations. Agricultural Education Programs should locate a leadership team in certain businesses that can assist extension and other agricultural-related programs in gaining additional funds for programs of interest.
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http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/523


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Pennsylvania 4-H. (2013). 4-H involvement in PA. Enrollment data. Penn State Extension. 4-H State Office. College of Agricultural Sciences


**Appendix A Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R)**

*Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure—Revised (MEIM—R)*

The following questions ask you questions about your Ethnic Identity. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, just answer as accurately as possible. Use the scale below to answer the questions. If you strongly agree with the statement write down 5; if you strongly disagree write down 1. If the statement is more or less true of you, find the number between 1 and 5 that best describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B Community Involvement Questionnaire

Community Involvement Questionnaire

**Purpose:** The purpose of this mixed methods study is to investigate the perceptions of perceived personal characteristics, community involvement, and life skills among African American high school males and how they influence their participation in agricultural-related youth programs. This questionnaire is focused on quality of life, perception of community involvement, and knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement.

**Confidentiality:** Your participation in this survey will be confidential.

**Instructions:** Only you should complete this survey. The time needed to complete this survey is about 20-30 minutes or less. All answers have been designed for quick answering. Please answer each of the following questions in terms of your opinions and feelings. You may skip any questions if you wish.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

**Quality of Life**

1. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in your own life?
   
   a. very satisfied  
   b. somewhat satisfied  
   c. neutral  
   d. somewhat dissatisfied  
   e. very dissatisfied

2. What do you think is the single greatest problem youth face today?
   
   a. school related/employment  
   b. violence substance abuse  
   c. social problems  
   d. depression  
   e. parents

3. Thinking about the overall condition of your community, how would you rate it as a place to live?
   
   a. very good  
   b. good  
   c. average  
   d. poor  
   e. very poor
Perception of Community Involvement

4. How important do you feel it is to be involved in your community?

   a. very important
   b. somewhat important
   c. neutral
   d. not too important
   e. not important at all

5. What is the greatest reason why you participate in volunteer/community programs?

   a. Requirement in school
   b. Opportunity to learn new skills/build resume
   c. Mandatory community involvement (i.e., criminal justice system, detention, disciplinary)
   d. Personal satisfaction/confidence
   e. Address problems in the community/care for community

6. Listed below are categories or types of volunteer/community activities. Please indicate which of the following you participated in the past 6 months?

   a. Charitable activities (e.g., helping the poor/less fortunate, visiting sick)
   b. Educational (e.g., teaching, mentoring, camp leader)
   c. Environmental (e.g., community clean-up, habitat for humanity)
   d. Political/government (e.g., attended meetings of political party, worked a campaign)
   e. Religious/Cultural (e.g., participated in a church-connected group, ethnic or social organization)

7. Knowledge and Attitudes towards Community Involvement

Thinking about the current level of community involvement among youth, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. Please check the items below with either 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) as they relate to your knowledge and attitudes towards community involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1-SD Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-D Disagree</th>
<th>3-N Neutral</th>
<th>4-A Agree</th>
<th>5-SA Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 I think there is a strong social and cultural acceptance of being involved in the community with youth in urban areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 I think my school system makes it a point to highlight the importance of participating in community activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I think there are many community service organizations that provide activities for youth to participate in my area.

I think there is a significant amount of information available regarding community service activities for youth in urban areas.

**Importance and Participation with Community Involvement**

8. How many hours of community involvement did you perform in the past month?

   a. 1-2 hours a month
   b. 3-5 hours a month
   c. 6-8 hours a month
   d. 8 or more hours a month
   e. No hours

9. What are some of the main reasons why you are not involved in community programs or activities?

   a. Family/parents
   b. Focused on studies
   c. Other extracurricular activities/sports
   d. Awareness of opportunities
   e. Do not feel it is important or was not asked

10. What type of community involvement organizations would you like to participate in?

   a. Nonprofit organization (e.g., YMCA, 4-H, museums, rotary, food bank)
   b. Health service sector (e.g., hospital, retirement home)
   c. School system (e.g., tutoring, clean-up, mentoring, leadership, wildlife, STEM, FFA)
   d. Community sports programs (e.g., mentoring, sports, college assistance)
   e. Church/service Organization (e.g., fundraising, empowerment, mentoring, spiritual, ethnic)

11. Thinking about the current level of importance and participation with community involvement, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. Please check the items below with either 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) as they relate to your level of importance and participation with community involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1–SD Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-D Disagree</th>
<th>3-N Neutral</th>
<th>4-A Agree</th>
<th>5-SA Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1 I am knowledgeable about opportunities to volunteer and become involved in my community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I feel that it is important for students like me to be involved in the community by volunteering time on things like charitable, civic, cultural, environmental or other social programs.

The more people are involved in their community, the better it is to create change.

Being involved in the community helps me to be a better person in school and at home.

My family participates in community service activities.

**Demographic and Background Information**

12. If you are interested in involving yourself in the community, how do you prefer to learn more about opportunities/activities?

a. Information from school advisor/teacher/community
b. School postings/flyers
c. Friends
d. Email/websites
e. TV

13. Which agricultural-related youth program do you participate in?

a. FFA
b. 4-H
c. Horticulture/Urban Gardening
d. Other agricultural-related youth program
e. I do not participate in an agriculture related youth program

14. What is your current grade level in school?

a. Grade 9
b. Grade 10
c. Grade 11
d. Grade 12
e. Advanced Subject

15. What is your age?

a. 13-14
b. 15-16
c. 17-18
d. 19-20
16. What kind of urban neighborhood do you live in?
   a. Urban Core (i.e., Downtown, major metro)
   b. Urban Pioneer (i.e., Up-and-coming, inner-ring suburbs)
   c. Suburbs (i.e., Subdivisions, large homes)
   d. Historical (i.e., Large older home, historical settings)
   e. Rural/Urban (i.e., miles from city, home with yard and space)

17. Which of the following best describes the highest level of education completed by any of your parents/guardians?
   a. Less than high school
   b. High school degree
   c. Vocational/Technical school/Trade (accounting, nursing, technician, auto, cosmetology)
   d. University degree (undergraduate degree)
   e. Graduate degree (master's degree, doctoral degree)

18. What type of career are you considering?
   a. Government agency/military/Criminal justice/Law
   b. Education/Teaching
   c. STEM Field (ex. Biology, Engineering, Agriculture, Environmental)
   d. Fashion Design/Arts
   e. Digital Media/Technology/ Music

19. Which PA school do you attend?
   a. Urban Public School A
   b. other
   c. Urban Public School B
   d. Urban Charter School C
Appendix C Focus Group Interview Protocol

Title: Exploring African American High School Age Males Perceptions of Agricultural-related youth programs in Urban Settings

Purpose: The purpose of this focus group is to examine the attitudes, beliefs, and participation among African American high school age youth in agricultural-related youth programs and non-agricultural-related youth in urban areas.

Description: The total time commitment for participation in the focus group will take 30-45 minutes. The youth participant does not have to answer any questions that they do not wish to answer. There are no risks to the youth participant in sharing this information. The youth names will not be used or other identifying information in any report or document. The information obtained from the interviews will only be available to the principal investigator. A tape recorder will be used during the focus groups to capture the youth participants’ responses. Participants will be provided with IRB approval/information and can choose to opt out of the interview at any time. The benefits of this study include participants understanding of their own perceived personal characteristics and life skills, awareness of agricultural-related youth programs, and providing feedback on experiences or issues through after-school/extra-curricular programs and involvement in the community. Thank you in advance for your participation.

1. What are some things you are interested in?
   ● Hobbies, Sports, Music...etc.

2. Explain your daily routine as it relates to school and after school or extracurricular activities.
   ● What do you do when you go home after school?

3. How important do you feel it is for youth to be involved in their community?
   ● How are you involved in your community?

4. What do you know about Agricultural-related youth programs?
   ● Which agricultural related youth programs are you familiar with?

5. What is your opinion about the opportunities provided to young black males in agricultural-related youth programs or other afterschool programs?
   ● How do you receive communication of opportunities about extra-curricular activities and/or agricultural-related youth programs?

6. Describe the relationships you have experienced with the following?
   ● Agricultural-related youth programs afterschool?
   ● Mentoring?
   ● Community Involvement?

7. What are the barriers do you see with agricultural-related youth program participation among African-American males?
   ● Transportation, Communication, Racism...etc.

8. What does it mean for you to be a Black young male in today’s society?

9. Are there any other thoughts you have regarding our conversation?
Appendix D Research Study Recruitment Letter

To whom it may concern,

My name is Maurice D. Smith Jr. and I am a PhD candidate and graduate research assistant in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education within the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State. I will be conducting a research study entitled “Exploring African American high school age male perceptions of agricultural-related youth programs in urban settings.” The purpose of this mixed methods study is to investigate the perceptions of perceived personal characteristics, community involvement, and life skills among African American high school males and how they influence their participation in agricultural-related youth programs. I am asking your assistance in facilitating recruitment of participants.

Participants should self-identify as being (a) an African-American young male, (b) between the ages of 13-18, (c) enrolled in an urban area high school in Pennsylvania, and (d) participate in an after-school/extra-curricular or agricultural-related youth program (i.e., FFA, 4-H, horticulture, urban gardening, STEM, etc.). Participants should have access to and willingness to use email, internet, and telephone for future follow-up focus groups.

The study will be broken into two parts. A formal classroom setting with proper technology will be utilized along with classroom response system (clickers) for collection of data. It will take 20-30 minutes to complete the survey. The second section of the study participants will be randomly selected and asked to participate in a follow-up focus group that will take place in person at a neutral location in their respective areas or the urban centers. The total time commitment for participation in the focus group will take 45-90 minutes. The youth participant does not have to answer any questions that they do not wish to answer. There are no risks to the youth participant in sharing this information. The youth names will not be used or other identifying information in any report or document. The information obtained from the interviews will only be available to the principal investigator. A tape recorder will be used during the focus groups to capture the youth participants’ responses. Participants will be provided with IRB approval/information and can choose to opt out of the interview at any time. The benefits of this study include participants understanding of their own perceived personal characteristics and life skills, awareness of agricultural-related youth programs, and providing feedback on experiences or issues through after-school/extra-curricular programs and involvement in the community.

Please share this recruitment letter or contact me at mds469@psu.edu, or 804-216-0529.

Thank you,

Maurice D. Smith Jr.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education
College of Agricultural Sciences
The Pennsylvania State University
012 Ferguson Building
University Park, PA 16802
Office Phone: 814-863-7877
Cell Phone: (804) 216-0529
Fax: 814-865-3746
Email: mds469@psu.edu
Appendix E Permission to use Phenomenological Variant of Ecology Model

Gmail - Permission to use Figure 1 & Framework on PVEST Theory

Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com>
Mon, Mar 27, 2017 at 6:43 AM

Permission to use Figure 1 & Framework on PVEST Theory - M.Smith

7 messages

Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com>  Mon, Mar 27, 2017 at 6:43 AM
To: mb spencer@uchicago.edu, olivergarland@uchicago.edu

Good Morning Dr. Spencer,

My name is Maurice D. Smith Jr., and I am a PhD Candidate at Penn State working in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education. My research interests center around minority youth involvement and perceptions in agricultural related youth development programming.

I am working on my dissertation research "Exploring African American high school male youth involvement in agricultural related youth programs in urban settings." I would like your permission to utilize your Figure 1: A Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) and reference this framework for my research study.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I look forward in hearing from you.

Thanks,

--
Maurice D. Smith Jr.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education
College of Agricultural Sciences
The Pennsylvania State University
012 Ferguson Building
University Park, PA 16802
Office Phone: 814-863-7877
Cell Phone: (804) 216-0529
Fax: 814-865-3746
Email: mds469@psu.edu

PVEST theory.pdf
264K

Margaret Beale Spencer <mbspencer@uchicago.edu>
Mon, Mar 27, 2017 at 8:51 AM
To: Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com>
Cc: dd2pree@gse.upenn.edu

Dear Maurice,

As long as the source information is included both with the figure AND, of course, in your descriptive text, then I am fine with providing permission. Good luck with the dissertation.

Best wishes,
M B Spencer

Margaret Beale Spencer, PhD
Appendix F Permission to use Strengths of Black Youth Model

Gmail - Permission to use Conceptual Framework on Black Youth... https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dc0ef74bc3&view=pt...

Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com>

Permission to use Conceptual Framework on Black Youth - M.Smith
5 messages

Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com> Mon, Mar 27, 2017 at 6:23 AM
To: nguerda@miami.edu

Good Morning Dr. Nicolas,

My name is Maurice D. Smith Jr., and I am a PhD Candidate at Penn State working in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education. My research interests center around minority youth involvement and perceptions in agricultural related youth development programming.

I am working on my dissertation research "Exploring African American high school male youth involvement in agricultural related youth programs in urban settings." I would like your permission to utilize your (Figure 1: A strength based model for black youth) and reference this framework for my research study.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I look forward in hearing from you.

Thanks,

--
Maurice D. Smith Jr.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education
College of Agricultural Sciences
The Pennsylvania State University
012 Ferguson Building
University Park, PA 16802
Office Phone: 814-863-7877
Cell Phone: (804) 216-0529
Fax: 814-865-3746
Email: mds469@psu.edu

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131K

Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com> Mon, Apr 3, 2017 at 6:25 PM
To: nguerda@miami.edu

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 27, 2017 at 6:23 AM
Subject: Permission to use Conceptual Framework on Black Youth - M.Smith
To: nguerda@miami.edu

Good Morning Dr. Nicolas,
My name is Maurice D. Smith Jr., and I am a PhD Candidate at Penn State working in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education. My research interests center around minority youth involvement and perceptions in agricultural related youth development programming.

I am working on my dissertation research: "Exploring African American high school male youth involvement in agricultural related youth programs in urban settings." I would like your permission to utilize your (Figure 7: A strength-based model for black youth) and reference this framework for my research study.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I look forward in hearing from you.

Thanks,

--
Maurice D. Smith Jr.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education
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Nicolas, Marie Guerda <nguerda@miami.edu>  
Mon, Apr 3, 2017 at 6:40 PM

To: Maurice Smith <msmithjr22@gmail.com>

Apologies for the delayed response but yes that's totally fine. Good luck!!

Warm Regards,
Nicolas Guerda, PhD
Professor
Department of Educational & Psychological Studies
School of Education and Human Development
Maurice D. Smith Jr.
CURRICULUM VITAE

1330 University Drive, State College, Pennsylvania 16801, Phone: (804) 216-0529; Email: msmithjr22@gmail.com

EDUCATION
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 8/2014 – 12/2017

Ph.D. in Agricultural and Extension Education
Emphasis: Youth Development
Dissertation: “Exploring African American High School Age Male Perceptions of Agricultural Related Youth Programs in Urban Settings.”
Graduate Committee: Dr. Nicole Webster, Dr. Mark Brennan, Dr. Connie Baggett, and Dr. Jonte C. Taylor.

Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 8/2010 - 12/2012

M.S. in Agricultural and Life Sciences
Emphasis: Extension Education
Graduate Committee: Dr. Kim L. Niewolny, Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd, and Dr. Jewel Hairston-Bronaugh.


B.S. in Agriculture
Emphasis: Business and Economics
Cum Laude

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

1st Place Graduate Student Poster Award at 63rd Annual North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Conference (NACTA), Purdue University. 2017

2nd Place Award at Gamma Sigma Delta Research Expo, Penn State University. 2017

1st Place MANRRS National Graduate Research Contest, Pittsburgh, PA 2017

Black Man on the Rise Leadership Award (Black Student Union), Penn State University. 2016

Omega Psi Phi Founders Memorial Scholarship Award, Virginia Beach, VA. 2016

Omega Man of the Year Award (Lambda Nu Chapter), Franklin, VA, 2016

1st Place MANRRS National Research Discussion Contest, Houston, TX. 2015

RESEARCH AND TRAVEL GRANTS

Sahakian Family Endowment to Present Paper at Hawaii International Conference on Education Professional Development Fund to Present Poster at NACTA Conference, Purdue University 2018 2017

AREAS OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTEREST

Extension Program Planning, Urban Youth & Families
Foundations of Agricultural and Extension Education
Developing Youth Leadership through Organization and Program Structure
4-H Youth Development Programming for Urban Audiences; Emphasis: African American Males
Agricultural Youth Organization & Structure; Civic Engagement for Urban Audiences
Teaching and Learning in Agriculture and Extension Education