

WE CAN TRAVEL, TOO: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY ON THE INFLUENCE OF
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL IN HIGH SCHOOL ON COLLEGE EXPERIENCES FOR
BLACK WOMEN

by

ZYER BEATY

(Under the Direction of Anneliese Singh)

ABSTRACT

The Institution of International Education (IIE, 2014) reports that only 6.1% of students traveling abroad are African American. The percentage provided by the IIE includes both African American men and women, so the number of Black women traveling abroad is significantly less. Therefore, despite research (Van hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Dietz, 2018) that emphasizes the importance of international experiences, Black girls in high school are not benefiting from these experiences. College students who study abroad, have shared how international travel has benefitted them (Walker, Bukenya & Thomas, 2011; Varela, 2017; “The World for Women”, 2019; Fox, 2019). However, Black college women are not included in the literature on college students studying abroad. Black college women are excluded from the benefits that those college students share; including, the ways that international travel has helped them matriculate through college (Penn & Tanner, 2009; Desoff, 2006). Despite being excluded from the literature highlighting the benefits of international travel and how those experiences help students matriculate from college, Black women are continuing to rise in levels of success in education (Rovai, Gallien & Wighting, 2005; Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015). Research regarding

college success for Black women most commonly highlights the challenges and failures of Black men and women (Rovai, Gallien & Wighting, 2005; Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015), but this research will highlight the factors of success and the college experiences for Black women who have traveled internationally in high school. Students that graduate from college and obtain a high grade-point average have traditionally been the measurement of success (Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015). This research will explore other factors that contribute to the success of Black women in college. Previous research has shown that Black women have defined success as attaining tenure, garnering prestige, increased earnings, and enhancing self-satisfaction (Gregory, 1995; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2009; Edwards, Beverly, & Alexander-Snow, 2011). This phenomenological study will explore how women who have had international travel experiences in college define success and how international travel in high school influences the college experience for Black women using a Black Feminist Thought Framework (Collins, 2000).

INDEX WORDS: Student success, international travel, Black students, college, Black women, high school, study abroad, college access, experiential learning

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the Black women in this world who are constantly fighting for their voices to be heard, to be seen and valued in society. This dissertation is dedicated to all the Black girls who are navigating systems and spaces that exclude them. This dissertation is dedicated to educators and researchers who are seeking new ways to create a cultivating and transformational learning environment for our Black girls. I dedicate this to my mom, who challenged me to strive for the best, to always be number one and to *never* give up. Mom, you have shown me what it means to be a powerhouse, a virtuous woman, to work hard, be a good friend, sister, mother, daughter, and provider for us all. I dedicate this dissertation to my dad, for always sharing your wisdom with me and being the best #girdad that I could ever imagine having. To making family a priority and for praying without ceasing. To Miana, I dedicate this dissertation to you, to the moment you come into the woman that you are growing to be. You are so talented, gifted, and one of the purest souls I know. I can't wait for the rest of the world to witness your Black girl magic. To my brothers Brandon, Jamal, Markeim, and Omaur, I dedicate this to you. Thank you for always loving me and protecting me whether near or far. To my grandparents, Queen B, Pops, Nana, grandpa, grandma and Millie, thank you for being the warriors that you are and for always supporting me along the way. To my nieces and nephews, Tiena, Zariyah, Trevion, Iyanna, Justin, JaKevion, Shaccara, JC, Amari, DeQuandre, Rylie, Brandon Jr., DeMerriyess, Jayden, and Jamal Jr. I dedicate this to you. Remember that you are capable of anything that you set your mind to. Do not let anyone tell you “no” or discourage you from your dreams. I am here for you always. I dedicate this work to you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background of Study	2
Black Women and America’s Systems	4
Black Travel Programs	5
Why International Travel	8
College Success for Black Women	10
Statement of Problem	13
Definition of Terms	14
Organization of Study.....	15
Summary.....	16
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	17
Educators Role and International Travel	18
Black Women and Girls Defining “College Success”	21
Black Women and International Experiences	25
Experiential Models of Learning.....	31

College Access for Black Girls	33
Recommendations	37
Summary.....	41
3 METHODOLOGY	42
Black Feminist Thought	44
Procedure and Participants	48
Study Instruments: Demographic Sheet, Interview Protocol, and Researcher Subjectivity.....	50
Researcher Subjectivity	51
Data Collection.....	55
Data Analysis.....	57
Trustworthiness	59
Research Considerations	60
Summary.....	61
4 FINDINGS	62
I Am Not Afraid Anymore, I Am A Global Citizen and Scholar.....	64
Definition of My Black Womanhood.....	70
Umoja – “I Am Because We Are”	74
Reclamation Of Educational Space	79
Privilege Of Being Black Women.....	81
Redefinition Of Success	83
Summary.....	85

5 DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	87
Review Of Themes	90
Recommendations For Educators And Research	93
Implications For Future Research	94
Implications For Future Practice	96
Implications For Future Advocacy	97
Study Limitations	98
Critical Reflection From The Researcher	99
Conclusion	103
REFERENCES	104
APPENDICES	
A DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE	119
B INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	121
C DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY RESULTS	126
D CONSENT FORM	127

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Black Women's Definition of Success Over Time	84

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Experiential Model of Learning.....	32

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Being able to travel as a Black woman has allowed me to connect with myself while taking my soul and mind on a trip. Travel has broadened my horizons and any limitation or confinement that was unconsciously placed upon me has been lifted and shattered. I can't say enough how travel has changed my life. I see travel as a vessel to transformation. When you travel with intention it begins the process of new beginnings, mine started last year when I left my career in Education to start Sisters and Suitcases. (Walker-McClendon, 2018)

There is a disparity of Black women traveling abroad (IIE, 2014). The research on international travel (Henbroff & Ruzs, 1993; Angwenyi, 2014; Desoff, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2006; 2011; Smith & Mrozek, 2016) tells us that international travel experiences are beneficial and help college students matriculate. Black women are missing from that literature. This study explores how international travel influences the college experience for Black women. Sisters and Suitcases is one of many up and coming travel groups for Black women ("Reuniting sisters with themselves", 2015). This group specifically provides spaces for Black women to embark on international experiences around the world as solo travelers ("Reuniting sisters with themselves", 2015).

The testimonials from the women who shared their experiences describe how they benefited from the various international experiences and ways that it changed their outlook on life. However, majority of Black women in America are not experiencing these benefits because

Black women are not traveling at the same rates as other races and genders (IIE, 2014). More importantly, Black girls in high school are not receiving the messages that international travel is an option for them because of the messages that they have received from the parents, the lack of knowledge on international travel, financial barriers, and access to these opportunities (Desoff, 2006; Henry, Butler & West, 2011; Miller, 2017; Jones, 2006). This phenomenological qualitative study explores the influence of international travel in high school on college experiences for Black women.

Background of Study

International travel is often seen as a privilege (Henbroff & Rusz, 1993). For Black women, international travel can seem unattainable for various reasons. Historically, Black women have not been able to travel internationally for educational purposes, vacations, “soul searching” missions, etc. (Green, 1936; Penn & Tanner, 2009;). Early writers such as Victor Hugo Green created guides for Black people to help us navigate the barriers that travel had (Green, 1936). In current times, you might assume that these guides were created for international travel, but this was for travel within our own country (Green, 1936). This guide, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, was updated annually from 1936 to 1966 to provide Black people with list of establishments that served Black people (Green, 1936). What access did Black people have to afford to travel internationally? Black people did not have access to hotels, restaurants, bathrooms, and water fountains, even after the Jim Crow Era (Alexander, 2011). Without this access in our own country, Black people were conditioned to believe that we are not deserving of opportunity (Alexander, 2011). Even in this twenty-first century, Black people are still fighting for our rights, advocating for our lives, and protesting that our lives matter (Garza &

Rickford, 2016). Moreover, Black women are also fighting for our rights as being Black *and* woman (Garza & Rickford, 2016). Only 6.1% of Black people are studying abroad (IIE, 2014).

Powerful Black women such as Zora Neale Hurston and Maya Angelou write memoirs about their traveling experiences as Black women (Angelou, 1997; Hurston, 1938). Maya Angelou in *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1997) recounts her experience moving and living in Ghana, where color was not an issue, but being an American brought its own set of challenges. Maya Angelou continues to discuss how she learned so much more about herself and others in the motherland (the continent of Africa) (Angelou, 1997). Zora Neale Hurston (1938) also writes about her journey to Jamaica and Haiti and how she learned and engaged in various rituals that were common practices. Zora Neale Hurston outlines her personal growth in the process and how it changed her perspective and knowledge on these common practices in *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Jamaica* (1938). Both Zora Neale Hurston and Maya Angelou had previous travel experiences before embarking on these journey's (Angelou, 1997; Hurston, 1938). Their previous experiences influence the urge and desire to travel and learn more about the world. Both women were astounding writers, activists, and trailblazers for Black women around the world. Their perspective on life helped them share these stories that Black girls and women can read to learn more about the intersectionality of Blackness around the world.

Angelou (1997) stated:

Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.

International travel brings together people from all cultures and races. Maya Angelou's statement is consistent with the literature that those who travel internationally have a better sense

of self and others (Desoff, 2006). Though international travel will not solve issues of racism, hatred, political dishonesty, etc. that our nation shares, it is a step towards building opportunities for Black girls and women to experience the ways that travel can influence their worlds. Furthermore, it opens doors for Black students to get excited about learning and travel around the world.

Black Women and America's Systems

The complexities of our American systems of racism, sexism, and classism will forever exist. An -ism is a distinctive doctrine, theory, system or practice (Dictionary online, n.d.). Black women will continuously have to navigate these systems and learn how to interact with people who may not value Black women (Collins, 2000; 2012; Harper, 2012). These Black women who are unvalued will continuously have to work hard to hold leadership positions, earn titles in corporate America, gain tenure in academia, be considered for research opportunities and receive the highest honors at our places of work (Zamani, 2003; Henry et al., 2012). These are only a few of the spaces that Black women are told as Black girls from our mothers that we will have to work twice as hard to earn these opportunities (DeSante, 2013; Dickens & Chavez, 2018). "Working twice as hard" is a reality among Black families who are encouraging their children to strive to be the best in all that they do (DeSante, 2013).

Black girls who learn about various systems around the world and how other cultures and races operate will help Black women understand ways to navigate these spaces in America. Furthermore, it will help Black girls and women understand more about their complex identities and the African diaspora. I am doing this study specifically with and for Black women because there is not enough literature that explores our experiences in these spaces.

Black Travel Programs

Currently, there are several travel programs that are designed for Black women such as the Nomadness Travel Tribe, Travel Noire, Tastemakers Africa, Black Adventurista, Sisters and Suitcases, Black Girls Travel Too and Passport Posse, to name a few (Fox, 2019). Each of these groups were designed by and for Black women to engage in international travel experiences, learn about other countries, and make memories that will last a lifetime. I am going to give a brief summary of these travel groups and how they have contributed to the lives of Black women. The Nomadness Travel Tribe started as a YouTube channel where the founder, Evie Robbie documented her travel experiences and now she has an organization where Black women around the world are embarking on these experiences, meeting new people and for some, earning their first passport stamps (Fox, 2019). Travel Noire is a virtual community for Black women to share their travel experiences and show Black people *how* to travel (Fox, 2019).

International travel can seem daunting and most do not know where to start. This platform, similar to the *Negro Motorist Green Book* (1936) shares ways to save and travel, how to make international travel more attainable, places to go and see abroad, and so much more (Fox, 2019). Tastemakers Africa created intentional itineraries for women to explore Africa by engaging in local culture, music, and art. The goal was to transform the negative perception of African countries for Black women and allow us the opportunity to learn about our culture, rituals, engage with local peoples and have an overall transformative experience (Fox, 2019). Black Adventurista's goal is to "inspire black women to conquer their fears, pursue their dreams, and fully experience the adventure that is life" (Fox, 2019). Finally, The goal of Passport Posse is to encourage the travel frequency of minorities abroad, provide a platform for healthy travel

interactions and communities of practice, and create trips and sponsor activities aimed to immerse globetrotters in the culture of the countries they have elected to visit (Fox, 2019).

These Black travel groups are working to encourage Black women in America to face their fears of international travel and conquer new beginnings (Nomadness Travel Tribe, Travel Noire, Tastemakers Africa, Black Adventurista, Sisters and Suitcases, Black Girls Travel Too and Passport Posse). Even though these groups currently exist and have a goal to reach Black women in America, there are still significant barriers to international travel and access that Black women face (Desoff, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2009; Walker & Thomas, 2011), such as finances, family obligations preventing travel, access and knowledge about these opportunities, and fear (Walker & Thomas, 2011).

These barriers will continue to exist for Black women and must be taken into consideration when exploring opportunities for international travel in the Black community. However, these barriers will not continue to hinder Black women from traveling if given opportunities in their pre-collegiate lives to experience travel and learn ways to circumvent these challenges.

Learning ways to navigate barriers to international travel can have a beneficial impact on Black women's experiences. After reviewing the websites and testimonials of the Black travel groups, women share how much one travel experience has shaped their outlook on life (Fox, 2019). For some women, these groups provided them with their first travel experience (Fox, 2019). There is so much about our culture as Black women that we must learn from all over this world in the African diaspora.

While these experiences have provided so many Black women with the opportunity to travel, majority of the participants are over twenty-one, taking their first trip (Fox, 2019).

Imagine the impact that travel can have on Black girls who are traveling abroad before their twenty-first birthday, specifically as teenagers in high school. This study will look at how international travel influences college experiences for Black women.

Moreover, there are very few travel programs for Black teenage girls; including Girls Going Global and Teens of Color Abroad. Girls Going Global is a non-profit organization that seeks to empower girls ages 13-17 through international travel, service and sisterhood (Girls Going Global, 2012). This organization is based in Atlanta and Philadelphia and the girls embark on international travel for one-week with their “cohort” of girls for that year (Girls Going Global, 2012).

In addition to international travel, the girls are required to attend monthly meetups where they learn about the places that they are going to travel, bond with the other girls in the program, learn to journal and about political issues around the world. Both the students and parents go through an interview process and most of the selected girls have never traveled abroad. The other travel organization, Teens of Color Abroad, is a program that aims to place Black students in language immersion travel experiences (Teens of Color Abroad, 2018). The goal is to have students incorporate the languages that they are learning in school into the real world (Teens of Color Abroad, 2018). Furthermore, Teens of Color Abroad aims to confront the racial disparity of students who are studying abroad in college earlier by creating engaging, international study opportunities for high school students that inspire them to continue this journey while in college (Teens of Color Abroad, 2018).

Students who participated in both Girls Going Global and Teens of Color Abroad have several stories of how their international experiences have changed their lives. Girls Going Global, 2012; Teens of Color Abroad, 2018) Some students grew to major in international

studies, go on to longer study abroad experiences in college, live in other countries and find ways to incorporate their interests into international opportunities (Girls Going Global, 2012; Teens of Color Abroad, 2018).

The skills, experiences and knowledge that students obtain from travel could directly influence their success in life, and for this study, college (Kuh et al., 2006; Penn, 2006; Marbley et al., 2007). Current research (Rovai, Gallien & Wighting, 2005; Kuh et al., 2006; Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015; Miller, 2017) on Black women in college analyzes the challenges that Black women encounter in college including; sense of belonging, lack of mentorship and support, lack of resources and the influence of their pre-collegiate experiences and families. The definition of success varies among women, so in order to explore the influence of international travel on college experiences and success, it is important to ask each participant what their definition of success is. Success can be personal, academic, familial, or financial (Miller, 2017; Henry et al., 2011).

The rate of Black women graduating from college continues to rise, but there is still a disparity in the number of Black women attending and completing college (Tinto, 1993; Henry et al., 2006; Strayhorn, 2012; McCallum, 2016). A huge factor for women going to college are their pre-collegiate experiences (high-school experiences) (Fries-Britt, 2002; Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, Yonai, 2014 & Watkins, 2017). Experiences and knowledge gained in high school about the opportunities that Black women have will influence future decisions that students make (Fries-Britt, 2002; Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, Yonai, 2014 & Watkins, 2017).

Why International Travel

I started traveling internationally at an early age, given my mother's military status. My experiences are unique, and I attribute my perspective on the world and success educationally on

my international experiences. My goal is to use this current research to build more opportunities for Black girls in high school. Traveling internationally has helped me learn more about myself, ways to interact with various communities and cultures, the importance of being culturally competent and has encouraged me to do the best that I can do through school. Traveling was not always easy for me. My earliest recollections were being a young girl trying to get acclimated into a new school system every couple of years, sometimes within the same school year. I never fathomed having friends that would last a lifetime or knew how to answer when people asked me where I was from. Friends, people, and places were temporary to me. In the back of my mind, I understood that I was going to move to another state or country.

At the time, I would envy those who grew up in one place their entire lives and had those long-lasting friends from their childhood. However, when I reflect on my experience, I realize that I have made connections all around the world and I have lasting friendships that look differently than my peers. Home was wherever I was living at the time. Home is not merely a physical entity; it was my culture and my family. With every move, I learned more about myself and others. International experiences are unique to every person, so my story will be different from other Black women.

However, this research reveals the overwhelming positive outcomes from international travel (Henbroff & Ruzs, 1993; Angwenyi, 2014; Desoff, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2006; 2011; Smith & Mrozek, 2016). Providing these experiences in education for Black women will contribute to the literature on international travel and how it influences Black students in high school. Though there is very little research on the students traveling internationally in high school (NCES, 2013; IIE, 2014), there are many study abroad experiences in higher education (“The Word for Women”, 2019; “HarvardWorldwide”, 2019; “Gordon-Zeto”, n.d.).

Colleges and universities are incorporating international travel and study abroad programs to their curriculum (“The Word for Women”, 2019; “HarvardWorldwide”, 2019; “Gordon-Zeto”, n.d.). Some colleges and universities require students to travel abroad at least once during their four years at the institution because of the benefits of international travel and the gained transferrable skills into the real world. Some of these programs are funded, which alleviate the financial burden from students. Considering the level of impact of international travel, school counselors and educators should consider implementing travel into their counseling programs.

Furthermore, considering the personal, social and emotional reactions from students who have engaged in international travel, school counselors can advocate for the need for funded international travel in high school counseling curriculums. School counselors have the access to resources that students need to successfully matriculate through high school and prepare for a life after high school.

College success for Black Women

Black women are perceived as the “new model minority” because of our increase in college enrollment and completion (Kaaba, 2008). However, the picture of success for Black college women is created in terms of how much Black women are entering college and the number of degrees earned in comparison to Black men (Butler, 2013; McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchmann, and Shwed, 2011; Roach, 2011, Strayhorn, 2016). Black women are facing these challenges in higher education, while continuing to strive for success. Iloh an Toldson (2013) share that forty-one percent of Black women are attending public two-year institutions, twenty-three percent are attending for profit institutions, twenty-four percent are enrolled in public four-year institutions and 10 percent are in private nonprofit four-year institutions.

This data is significant to the post-graduate opportunities that are available to Black women after they graduate from these institutions, foundation of their knowledge of available careers and overall career choice options, and lifetime earnings based on the institution that they attended (Patton & Croom, 2017). For example, for-profit institutions have been scrutinized for high cost and low job-attainments outcomes (Iloh and Toldson, 2013). Black women who are attending these institutions may not have as much success post-graduation as Black women who attended other institutions.

In addition to the opportunities that are available to Black women based on the type of institution attended, Black women are still facing challenges in higher education; regardless of the type of institution. While the level of challenges may vary (e.g. students at an Historically Black college or university might not feel the same challenge of invisibility that a Black student at a historically White institution might face), Black women are still navigating these experiences. Research on the challenges that students of color face in higher education, focus on all students of color and only little research acknowledges the challenges that Black women specifically face (Patton & Croom, 2017). Students of Color face challenges of isolation, low retention and graduation rates, academic preparation, financial issues, and invisibility on campus (Loosen, 2011; Strayhorn, 2012; Carter, Locks, and Winkle-Wagner, 2013).

In a recent study on the experiences of Black immigrant women transitioning into college (Patton & Croom, 2017), researchers explored the increase in the number of Black college students who were born in other countries or are children of immigrants. In this study, these students were labeled as Black immigrant students who were either first- or second-generation immigrants based on their birthplace. Black immigrant students represent about 40.6 percent of the Black students at Ivy League institutions, but only make up about fifteen percent of the

population (Massey, Mooney, Torres, and Charles, 2007). This study explored the ways that Black immigrant women and Black women were able to transition successfully into college. Previous research says that Black women were able to successfully transition into college when they feel valued (Rayle and Chung, 2007), have mentors (Patton and Harper, 2003), and are visible at their university (Collins, 2000). However, Black women are experiencing stereotyping, microaggressions, and racism from peers and faculty; making it difficult to feel valued, find mentors, feel visible, and successfully transition into college (Harper, 2013).

Black students perceive campuses to be exclusive and unwelcoming; which limits their engagement outside of the classroom (Nelson Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, and Williams, 2007). Additionally, Black women related their experiences to high school achievement (Patton & Croom, 2017). In high school these women were high achievers but struggled with the academic and social challenges of college and feelings of being unprepared (Patton & Croom, 2017). The Black immigrant woman found their sense of belonging by participating in culturally related groups and activities (Patton & Croom, 2017).

Ethnic identity and race served as a resource and motivator for Black Immigrant students (Griffin, 2006; Fries-Britt, George Mwangi, and Peralta, 2014). Black women across the diaspora need cultural support to successfully transition into college. Furthermore, students shared that retention programs that offered support for first-generation college students (students who are the first in their family to attend college) served as a bridge to students' academic adjustment and success (Fischer, 2007).

Given the measure of success for the "new model minority" (Kaba, 2008), researchers must critically explore the experiences of Black women specifically when describing Black college success. Black women earned 10.4% of bachelor's degrees compared to 73.3% of

degrees earned by White women (NCES, 2013; Henry, Butler & West, 2011). There is still research to conduct with Black women to contribute to the literature on college experiences and success. This current study will explore this phenomenon.

Statement of the Problem

There is little research on the influence of specific pre-collegiate experiences on Black college success (Giuffrida, 2003; Kuh et al., 2006; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). The current research on Black college success centers the challenges that Black women face in college, but do not explore the factors that contribute to the success of Black women in college (Miller, 2017).

Furthermore, the rate of Black women enrolling in college is rising, but Black women are still earning college degrees significantly less and are consistently out-performed by our White peers (NCES, 2013; Henry, Butler & West, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Recent research on international travel has suggested that study abroad experiences have a positive impact on degree attainment (Xu, De Silva, Neufeldt, and Dane, 2013). Moreover, students who study abroad are graduating at higher rates and in shorter time periods, learning to think critically, challenge and create new ideas, gain leadership skills, and have greater awareness of self and other cultures (VanHoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Barclay Hamir, 2011; Dietz, 2018). Given these benefits of study abroad experiences, there is a significant impact of international travel. However, Black students only make up 6.1% of study abroad experiences in college.

The data on the percentage of Black women studying abroad specifically and the percentage of Black high school students' who study abroad in high school, does not exist. Given the small percentage of Black students who are gaining these experiences, Black women are deprived of these benefits that can influence their success in college. Additionally, pre-collegiate

experiences influence college success (Fries-Britt, 2002; Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, Yonai, 2014 & Watkins, 2017). Pre-collegiate experiences include factors (e.g. family challenges and background, socio-economic status, personal and social challenges, home and community environment, and type of schools previous attended) that influence students before college. Considering the significance of pre-collegiate experiences, international travel and study abroad on college success, this study is going to explore how international travel in high school influences the college experience for Black women.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, I will use the following terms and have provided a definition to guide their use:

Study Abroad: A guided program designed for students to travel to another school in another country to gain an educational experience (e.g. take a new class, learn a language, engage with and learn about other cultures)

Experiential Learning: An experience that students can have either internationally or domestically where they are required to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

International Travel: Any travel that is taken outside of the country. This can be for educational purposes, personal exploration or family travel.

Success: Academic, personal or social achievement of goals set by each individual. For this study, success will be defined by the participants. My view of success will not influence their definitions, because this research will center *their* experiences and not what the literature determines to be success. However, the definitions that are provided in this review of literature is included to give us a perspective on how success is viewed by others.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation research study is outlined in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by providing the background, the statement of problem, research question and the rationale and significance of the study. Chapter two includes a literature review of previous research about international experiences in college and high school, college success for Black women, definitions of success, challenges that Black women and girls face in high school, college access for Black women, an experiential learning model, and recommendations for school counselors contributing to the educational experiences of Black girls.

College success for Black women includes several factors that previous researchers have identified as family, goal setting, dedication, role models, campus culture, and resources (McCall, 2011; Harper, 2013). There are additional factors to college success and the college experience that have not been explored in the research, such as international travel. College success is defined by the participants and their experiences will be unique to their history with international travel. This literature review is not applicable to all Black women and girls, but it does provide a foundation for the current study.

Chapter three, the methodology outlines the current study and includes the process and guidelines of the research, positionality statement, methodological approach and the theory that will guide this research. There are other factors that I explore with the participants because it influences the experiences of Black women and girls and international travel, such as place of travel, type of travel, family members who have previously traveled, type of high school attended, type of college attended and their specific journey abroad. These factors are considered in this study through the demographic questionnaire and interview protocol.

Chapter four outlines the findings from the interviews with the participants. In this chapter, I include the codes, categories and themes that are developed from the interview. Furthermore, I will discuss the common themes, using excerpts from the interview. Chapter five will be the discussion of the study, including limitations and recommendations for future research, future practice, future advocacy, and a critical reflection from the researcher.

Summary

This chapter introduced the current study on international travel and college experiences for Black women by including background information on the influence of study abroad experiences and Black college experiences, the statement of the problem and significance and rationale for this study. Black women are not graduating at the same rates as their White peers (NCES, 2013) and research on international travel has suggested that study abroad experiences have a positive influence on college success (Xu et al., 2013) I am going to explore the influence of international travel on college experiences for Black women.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explores the influence of international travel in high school on college experiences for Black women. This study serves as a guide on how to incorporate international travel into a comprehensive school counseling program and education curricula. Furthermore, this study aims to help school counselors understand the ways that international travel influences college experiences for Black women. School counselors are encouraged by the American Counseling Association (ASCA) to “...promote student success in the school, the home, the community and the world” (ASCA, 2005).

School counselors have access to resources that students need to matriculate through the P-12 school systems and be successful post-graduation. School counselors should build programs that help students develop the skills students will need when they face political and social interpersonal challenges with advocacy work (Singh, Urbano, Haston & McMahan, 2010). These guidelines help school counselors and educators understand the ways that school counselors can advocate with and for students. Specifically, this study provides recommendations for school counselors working with Black girls in high school to build a program, provide resources, and encourage students to engage in various learning opportunities (e.g. study abroad and experiential learning) that will influence college experiences.

Previous research has highlighted ways that international travel and experiential learning experiences help students matriculate through college, build meaningful relationships, gain a better understanding of themselves and learn about other cultures; which helps students learn how to integrate in different environment than their own (Van hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Dietz,

2018). International travel has many benefits to educational learning, success, and culture. Organizing the environment to encourage learning is central to students' growth in learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015; A. Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Sharan, 2010). This current study aims to provide school counselors with the tools and research that is needed to understand the ways that international travel experiences in high school influence Black women college experiences and collaborate with educators, faculty and staff to create opportunities and a cultivating learning environment for Black girls in high school.

Educator's Role and International Travel

There is an expectation for school counselors to be culturally competent (ASCA, 2005). The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler & McCullough, 2015) were created to provide school counselors with a culturally competent framework to build a comprehensive school counseling program. Educators are faced with many challenges when working with students because of the job demands.

School counselors provide individual counseling, group counseling, career and college counseling and conduct classroom curriculum lessons in addition to completing administrative tasks for students and their families. However, it is critical for school counselors to follow the national guidelines for a comprehensive program (e.g. Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies, ASCA National Model, etc.).

One of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, counseling and advocacy interventions suggest that counselors engage in international and global affairs (Ratts, et al., 2015). A way for school counselors to engage in international and global affairs is to encourage and provide opportunities for students in high school to travel internationally for their learning and growth.

There are various factors that contribute to learning experiences. Learning occurs in the classroom, among peers, in the community, and all over the world. The most valuable learning experiences occur when students are required to think critically, challenge ideas and create. Black students, culture, and high school experiences are missing from the literature on experiential learning; including overseas and study abroad experiences (Dietz, 2018).

Travel abroad rates have increased for Black students from 2001-2010 to 4.7% from 3.5% (Nahal, 2012). For White students, the travel abroad rates have decreased from 84.3% to 78.7% from the same years (Nahal, 2012). Even though there was a 5.6% decrease among White students, there is still a 74% difference between students traveling abroad between Black and White students. This 1.2% increase in nine years is progression, but there is still a significant difference in the percentage of Black students who travel abroad from White students. These students are not experiencing global education and access, which places Black students at a disadvantage from their peers. Students involved in experiential learning can apply material to real world experiences (Tovar & Misischia, 2018).

Black students participate in international education experiences significantly less than other college students (Penn & Tanner, 2009). While many educators are working to create international opportunities for students, Black students have only made up 6.1% of the total college population that participated in a study abroad program (IIE, 2014). National databases, such as the Institution for International Education (IIE) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for international education includes data for college students studying abroad, but do not include data for high school students.

Despite the benefits of international travel and study abroad experiences, Black women and girls in school have been faced with various challenges that have hindered students from

participating. Some of the challenges that Black women and girls in school face include, but are not limited to: social economic affluence, lack of encouragement and support, social engagement in their communities, direction of influence from family and friends, the perception of international travel enhancing career and educational opportunities (Penn & Tanner, 2009; Steven Walker, & Thomas, 2011).

Moreover, research on international education typically centers college and graduate school students. Black students in college are also faced with the challenge of cost to study abroad, major completion requirements, knowledge of international opportunities available to students, and grade point average (Penn & Tanner, 2009; Steven Walker & Thomas, 2011). International travel and study abroad experiences are crucial to the growth of students and Black students are disproportionately gaining access to these opportunities compared to their peers. These opportunities include travel abroad experiences, on-campus mentorship relationships, and fellowship programs, to name a few. Research has shown that in addition to what students experience inside of the classroom, their out-of-classroom experiences are also a critical component of successful matriculation (Miller, 2017; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; WolfWendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009).

Considering the benefits that out-of-classroom experiences have on matriculation, this research will also explore the definitions of success for Black women and their perspectives on college success. A highly researched area for Black women centers the challenges that Black women face in education (Patton, Crenshaw, Haynes & Watson, 2016; Fhagen-Smith, Vandiver, Worrell & Cross, 2010; Collins, 2000). Traditionally, college success is often measured by students' abilities to finish college and/or obtain a high grade-point average (Wrinkle-Wagner,

2015). Successful matriculation for Black woman will look different for every student and their college experiences.

Student success is defined as gains in personal development, general education, intellectual skills, science and technology, and vocational preparation (Miller, 2017). Research that explores student integration reveals that academic and social experiences outside of school are essential to enriching student's overall experience (Giuffrida, 2003; Kuh et al., 2006; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). Previous research emphasizes the importance of access to head start programs, experiential learning experiences in college, and various factors that impact the level of student success throughout college and beyond.

Additionally, college success is contingent upon each person and their definition of success. For Black women, the definition of success will include various factors and pre-collegiate experiences that I plan to explore in this study. Upon completion of this study, I will look for themes in their explanation of success, the literature, and theoretical framework to inform the definition of college success for Black women.

Black Women and Girls Defining “College Success”

The research on Black women college success centers the challenges of intersectionality, with very little attention given to the factors that contribute success (Miller, 2017). Furthermore, recent studies have explored some of the factors that contribute to success in higher education, yet there is a dearth of literature related to how high school developmental experiences influence success in college. In this study, the definition of success for Black women will be defined by the participants of the study and their experiences. Using a phenomenological research tradition and Black Feminist Theoretical Framework (Collins, 2000), the purpose of this study is to explore definitions of success among Black college women, as well as how international experiences in

high school have influenced their collegiate experiences. In this study, I will review the definition of success for Black women college students, Black students international travel experiences, the experiential learning model and college access within the Black community using previous literature and student voices.

Institutions of higher learning strive to develop learning opportunities for the successful matriculation of their students (Miller, 2017). College success is the foundational, philosophical premise for which institutions of higher education exist (Von Robertson, Mitra, & Delinder, 2005). Black college women's success is normally centered around race and gender, without giving attention to how these identities shape their experiences. There are several gaps in the literature for Black women.

While research analyzes college experiences among Black women, challenges of intersectionality in predominately White spaces, and the experience of being a Black woman working twice as hard to earn the same positions and opportunities of her peers (Rovai et al., 2005; Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015; Patton & Croom, 2017); there is still a dearth of information that is missing from the literature. For example, factors in high school that influence Black college success or how Black students only make up 10% of bachelor degree holders in the US (NCES). The process to successful matriculation is often researched in terms of failures, challenges, and setbacks (Harper & Wood, 2016). There is also an over-emphasis on the differences between Black male and female college application and completion rates (Sharpe & Chambers, 2012), Black male success (Harper, 2005; Harper & Wood, 2016), the experiences of Black women in STEM (Harper, 2010), and challenges that Black students face in higher education.

In 2001-2002, Black women earned 10.4% of bachelor's degrees compared to 73.3% of degrees earned by White women (NCES, 2013; Henry, Butler & West, 2011). The students that I

will interview for this study will be between the ages of 18 and 24; meaning that they were born between 1995 and 2001, making these students a part of both generation Z and the millennial generation. These generations are known to have the most college-bound and attending students in the United States History (Henry, Butler, & West, 2003). With the highest number of students attending colleges, Black women are still going and completing college at lower rates than White women. Furthermore, previous research states that Black women of these generations are born in single family homes, with teenage mothers, and grew up with limited access to internet and other technology (Marbley, Hull, Polydore, Bonner, & Burley 2007; Henry, et. al, 2011). These challenges are the very few among other challenges that Black women face in education and create a mindset that international travel is not a possibility for them.

Additional challenges that Black women face in higher education include the feeling of isolation, marginalization, racial hostility, feelings of being misunderstood, working twice as hard for the same result as their peers, being held to a different standard by professors (Rosales & Pearson, 2003; Henry et. al, 2011). Furthermore, Black women have faced challenges with seeking help from professors unless the professor was of the same race and/or gender (Henry et. al, 2011). This fear puts Black women in a position to miss out on various opportunities, such as internships, career options, international experiences and limits the amount of faculty role models and mentors available to Black women.

In a previous study on the influence of race and gender, and the experiences of Black college women, the researcher coded themes that revealed that the participants related being an African American woman to struggling, being problematic, and the need of being conscious (Jackson, 1989). These themes elucidate the pressure that Black women feel in college to execute

daily in school and among peers. This research supports the data of Black women who are not completing college.

Environmental factors such as being underrepresented in the research, colleges, various career fields, international experiences all play a vital role for success and persistence in college (Henry et. al, 2011). Additionally, Black women deal with negative stereotypes about their physical appearance and their mental capacity and abilities (Henry, et. al, 2011). Black women feel invisible in their college communities and among their peers. There is an increasing number of Black women enrolling in college, however Black students are less likely to persist completing a degree than White students (Cross & Slater, 2001). This study will explore what factors contribute to Black women success in college and help explain why Black women are less likely to persist completing a degree. Furthermore, how those factors that contribute to success are influenced by their pre-collegiate international experiences.

Black women who enter college often carry negative and racial experiences from their pre-college life (Watkins, 2017). Experiences such as traumatic racial incidents and financial burden are likely to affect their decision to persist, especially if they have further detrimental experiences while in college (Fries-Britt, 2002; Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, Yonai, 2014 & Watkins, 2017). In addition to traumatic racial incidents, Black women face issues regarding race and gender, interpersonal challenges, underrepresentation in higher education compared to other races, self-identity and psychological issues (Henry, Butler, West, 2011; Miller, 2017; Jones, 2006). Research on Black women college success acknowledges the importance of experiences before college but fails to incorporate those experiences in the literature (Miller, 2017). Some of the experiences before college that have not been explored include family background, skills and

abilities, school culture, personal and institutional experiences. These factors are critical components of college success.

Additionally, the literature does not explore the high school factors that influence Black women's success in higher education. Black women are working hard to thrive in dominant environments that do not encourage or support their multiple identities (Fhagen-Smith, Vandiver, Worrell, and Cross, 2010). This study will focus on international experiences in high school that have influenced college experiences for Black women.

Black Women and International Experiences

Black women and girls, culture, and high school experiences are missing from the literature on experiential learning; including overseas and study abroad experiences (Dietz, 2018). Experiential learning is any learning that supports students in applying their knowledge and conceptual understanding to real-world problems or situation where the teacher directs and facilitates learning (Tovar & Misischia, 2018). Experiential learning can occur in laboratories, classrooms, and the community. The importance of experiential learning is that the teacher or facilitator is incorporating activities that students can and will apply their knowledge to the real world. Study abroad programs and experiences are examples of worldwide experiential learning. "Study abroad has the power to transform the lives of college students who are given the opportunity to participate and broaden their education" (Smith & Mrozek, 2016 p.9).

Most international travel abroad experiences in high school are centralized in foreign language departments, where students travel overseas to the county where the language that they are learning is most commonly spoken. This opportunity is typically only granted to students who are in the higher-level foreign language courses, or members of a foreign language club. Statistically, only 20% of the total school age population are enrolled in foreign language classes

(and only for the first two years) (American Councils for International Education “ACIE”, 2017). Of that 20%, approximately 70% of those students are studying Spanish; which restricts the number of countries that foreign language departments and students will travel to.

Furthermore, only 11 states have foreign language as a graduation requirement, 16 states have no graduation requirement for foreign language and 24 states have a graduation requirement that can be filled by multiple subjects (ACIE, 2017). The 20% of students studying abroad in high school includes all races, which lead to the assumption that the percentage of Black high school students studying abroad would be significantly less considering the national data on international travel in college (IIE,2014). Despite the literature on the benefits of studying abroad in high school, current literature is missing the experiences and influence of international travel in high school and how it effects the college experience and students’ outlook on success.

An example of a current study abroad program in high school is the Rotary Youth Exchange. The Rotary Youth Exchange is a comprehensive program that offers several international and national experiences for students ages 15-19 in the United States and abroad (“Rotary International, n.d.). This program was founded in 1905 and requires students to completely immerse in a new culture. Students are required to learn a new language, discover a new culture, and become global citizens (“Rotary International”, n.d.). There are both long-term and short-term options for students to choose, whether they are going abroad, or students abroad are coming to the United States. Students can travel for 1 academic year, where they will live with approximately three host families, and attend a local school in the area or they can choose to embark on a short-term experience where they will travel during academic breaks anywhere from a couple days through three months. The program has been around for over 100 years, but

the data on who is attending these trips is non-existent (“Rotary International”, n.d.). The Rotary Exchange also covers room, board and school fees. Students are only responsible for their flights, insurance and any required documents to go abroad (e.g. passport). This experience is only offered to students who go to schools that have a local Rotary club on their campus (Rotary International, n.d.).

Previous research analyzing study abroad programs in high school (Loew & ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 1980) share that less than 2,000 students in the US study abroad during the academic year. This can be attributed to access to these travel opportunities, availability of travel programs in high school, family challenges, and financial challenges. However, this research (Loew & ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistic, 1980) explored the five purposes of international travel; personal development, development of interpersonal development of people for another society, development of cross-cultural perspectives on the world, acquisition and transfer of knowledge and finally, development of global perspectives. This research is consistent with the current literature on the benefits of studying abroad in college. The consistency among the literature across decades about study abroad experiences, reveal that this is important work, but there is still so much research to explore and include in current studies.

High school students who study abroad might want to address global issues from a global perspective (Angwenyi, 2014). In this study, high school students who engaged in short time study abroad experiences were more prepared for college, understood global issues awareness and cultural sensitivity. For this current study, I will use the five purposes of international study to guide some of the interview questions to learn whether these purposes for international travel are similar for Black college women. Furthermore, I want to learn what the differences in the

purpose of international travel are among Black women students who are at different institutions and with different backgrounds, compared to the purposes that are outlined in previous literature (Loew & ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 1980).

Higher education institutions are including study abroad as a component to their curriculum because of the learning experience that engages students to be intellectual, ethically grounded, socially responsible and globally connected (Tovar & Misischia, 2018). Given the urge for higher education institutions to suggest that their students travel internationally and become globally connected, this research for the influence of international travel on Black women success is critical.

Research exploring the benefits of study abroad and international experiences reveal that exposure to different social and cultural environments, recognition of students' own cultural values and traditions, maturity levels, and knowledge of diverse societies and cultures are among the top benefits of study abroad programs (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Students who engaged in study abroad experiences shared the benefits and challenges of their experiences in a study conducted by Van hoof & Verbeeten (2005), which was consistent with previous literature. Students shared that international travel benefited them personally and created spaces for them to grow, learn about cultural differences, learn how to live and work in places that they were not used to, and gave them the ability to see another part of the world.

Additionally, student's felt that their international experiences help them understand other cultures, appreciate their own culture, and build grit through the various challenges that they faced. Some of the challenges were learning how to adapt, endure culture shock, build patience, break down stereotypes and being away from home. While these are common

challenges of international travel, these challenges made the students become better students overall.

Moreover, in the Dietz (2018) study, the research revealed that students who had international learning experiences had a greater awareness of the nonprofit sector, leadership abilities, determined practices for leading change, personal and professional development. Additionally, the researchers realized that the student perspective on the impact of experiential learning experiences is missing from the literature and learning experiences. In the Miller (2017) study, research indicated that the Black women who made acquaintances with others who were different from them also reported having greater understanding in general education topics such as the arts, literature, history, and other cultures, philosophies, and geographical areas around the world. This study sought to develop their program based on the student perspective because their voices are often missing from the literature. The greatest impact came from the impact of the program and international learning experiences. These students reported wanting these opportunities going into college so that they could have a broader perspective and awareness.

Black students are missing valuable learning opportunities and skills from the lack of international educational experiences (Desoff, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2009). The typical study abroad student is a White female majoring in a social science discipline (IIE, 2004b). A study by Penn and Tanner (2009) analyzed the experiences of Black high school graduates enrolled in a 6-week college-preparatory program the summer before their first year of college. This study was conducted to test the theory that previous amount of travel can determine who will participate in a study abroad program (Penn & Tanner, 2009). Dr. Penn (2006) is an African American, Fulbright scholar who explains his experiences overseas in a program that only accepts less than 3% of Black students. He stated that his experiences in Egypt through the Fulbright program

allowed him to bring what he learned to the classroom and his community. After the program, he was encouraged to travel and explore other countries and cultures to add to his pedagogy and encourage other students to do the same.

Research shows that influence from faculty can encourage Black students to engage in international learning experiences when they have not gone before (Henbroff & Ruzs, 1993; Penn & Tanner, 2011). Maya Angelou, Ivory Nelson and Ruth Simmons are Fulbright scholars who are now world renown authors, poets, activists, educators, scientist, university presidents, and changemakers in the Black community. Programs such as Fulbright, teach students how to research, think critically, and become globally conscious. Our Black students need these opportunities to learn and to be challenged, but they are not gaining access into these programs.

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of a study abroad program and international experiences. Students can articulate that their experiences were life changing- but have trouble describing in what ways their experiences changed their lives specifically. Most studies on international travel and study abroad experiences focus on the impact on college students and college programs designed for students, but the high school training and experience is a major factor for students; specifically, Black students going to college (Harper, 2010). The National Association of International Educators (NAFSA, 2003) states that “an educational opportunity outside the United States can be among the most valuable tools for preparing a student to participate effectively in an increasingly interconnected, international community that demands cross-cultural skills and knowledge” (p.4).

International educational experiences require students to think critically, apply knowledge to the real world and learn about other cultures. In addition, international experiences require students to learn more about ways to communicate with people that are not like them,

learn more about themselves and ways to adapt to a new environment. Many of these skills are also useful for college and can help students feel prepared to transition to college after high school. The ability to function in multicultural and international environments is a new required skill for the college graduates of the 21st century (Penn, 2006, p.45). Black students want to participate in international experiences, but do not know how to access these opportunities (Penn & Tanner, 2011). The opportunities will provide experiences of learning and growth. Learning can occur either in or outside the classroom. Using a learning model, school counselors can justify ways that students can learn from international travel experiences.

Experiential Model of Learning

Models of learning are ways that students acquire new knowledge and provide a foundational layout for how to teach students. There are various models of learning in education. However, there aren't any models of learning specifically for international travel in education or counseling. For the purpose of this study, I would like to use the experiential learning model (ELM) founded by David A. Kolb, which is based on theorist (John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget) who believed that people learn from their experiences, which shape their experiences and is the foundation of experiential learning (Chakravorty & Hales, 2017). These theorists describe experiential learning as “‘action learning’, whose core activities are interventions driven by conceptual principles, which produce great opportunities for influencing practice and for contributing to development and refinement of the principles” (Chakravorty & Hales, 2017, p. 4932).

This learning is displayed in a current model that outlines four stages of student learning. Stage one, the concrete experience where the student encounters a new experience or engages in reinterpretation process of an existing experiences. In terms of this study, this experience can be

traveling abroad for the first time, Black women feeling like international travel is for us, too or learning something new overseas that makes the student critically challenge something that she already knew. Stage 2, reflective observation where the student reflects on the new experience and identifies any inconsistencies between experience and understanding. This can be demonstrated by students continuously analyzing the world around them, yearning to learn more about culture from a global perspective and encouraging others to do the same.

The third stage, abstract conceptualization, where the student either creates or modifies a new idea or concept and uses that idea to form conclusions or generalization. This stage can be explored by students' post-international travel experience who begins to analyze everything around them. Finally, the fourth stage, active implementation where the student plans and tries out what was learned and can apply the new knowledge to other situations. Students will be able to implement skills that they learned, areas that they improved on, new perspectives that they gained throughout their college experiences. The ELM is a foundation for how student learn and process their international experiences. A visual of this model is found below in *figure A*.

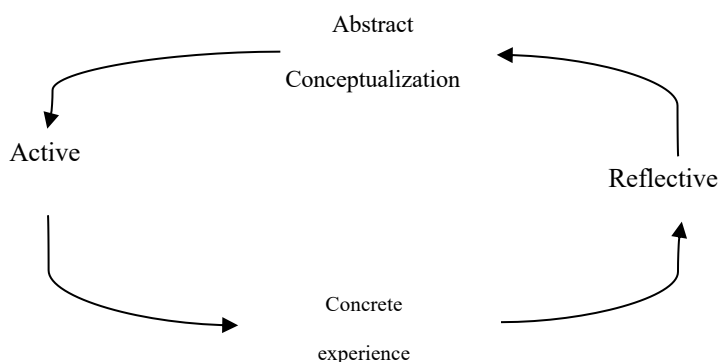


Figure A. This learning model, founded by David A Kolb which represents “action learning” in four stages, the concrete where students encounter a new experience, reflective observation where students reflect on the experience, abstract conceptualization, where students create new ideas to form a conclusion, and active implementation where students apply this knowledge.

College Access for Black Girls

College Access is defined as the knowledge about programs, scholarships, opportunities, funding, and previous experiences from family about and for college or other post-graduate resources (Cataldi, Bennett, Chen, NCES & RTI International 2018). According to research, African American women do not normally decide to enroll in or apply for graduate school on their own (McCallum, 2016). McCallum (2016) discusses that family, various educational experiences throughout their lifetime all provided resources, insight and emotional or social support to get them to their graduate support. These same challenges are evident in the application process and journey to applying to college. Given these challenges, it is important that we understand the ways that Black women who have applied and matriculated through college have been able to navigate the process. Furthermore, researchers should begin analyzing the multiple factors of success that have helped “successful” Black women on their educational journeys in order to incorporate the complexities of being a Black woman.

Previous research explored what happens to Black women who do not matriculate through college. Tinto (1993) researched the reasons that students tend to leave or drop-out of college. The research revealed that there were several factors including; pre-entry characteristics (i.e., familial background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling), goals and commitments, institutional experiences, personal/normative integration, and the departure decision. A major component of this study suggested that students who have greater academic and social integration into the campus community are more likely to persist (Miller, 2017).

These factors contribute greatly to the overall success of the student and will look differently depending on each students’ access to international travel experiences, educational programs, scholastic opportunities and other entities that would contribute to their overall

success in college. Other factors to consider include: the type of institution the student attends, SES status, high school experiences, and upbringing.

In addition to the factors to consider for Black women seek international travel experiences, the literature highlights challenges that Black women face. However, there are also institutional challenges for Black women such as lack of faculty support and encouragement, lack of opportunities offered to students, lack of knowledge about international travel experiences and opportunities, environmental and community factors that contribute to the mindset that international travel is unattainable to Black students (Desoff, 2006).

For some students, the central focus is getting to college and that is a challenge. To couple that with exploring international opportunities in an educational system where students feel invalidated, invisible and unsupported seems impossible. The director of study abroad and Spelman, Margery A Ganz says that study abroad is seen as a luxury rather than an asset to your education among Black students (Desoff, 2006). Historically Black Colleges and Universities are working to increase global engagement among their students. Colleges such as Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia are working to increase international travel among all students who attend through their global alumnae network and by including that "...Spelman empowers the whole person to engage the many cultures of the world and inspires a commitment to positive social change" in their mission statement ("About Spelman College", n.d.). Furthermore, Spelman requires all international studies majors to spend a semester abroad, but there is a huge financial challenge to help students.

Currently, Harvard University requires students to have a passport and have incorporated international travel as part of their curriculum ("Harvard Worldwide", 2019). Harvard University, a highly selective Ivy League school with a 5.6% acceptance rates provides these

opportunities for their students who may have already had access to these opportunities (“Admission Statistics”, 2018). Minority serving institutions (e.g. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions) are beginning to create opportunities for minorities around the world (American Council on Education). Specifically, creating study abroad other international opportunities for Black women at Historically Black Colleges Universities (HBCU’s) across the country is critical to the growth of Black women gaining international experiences. HBCU’s such as Spelman College, which is designed for Black women have created these experiences for their students as outlined previously in this review of literature.

Agnes Scott, an all-women’s institution in Georgia also incorporates a global component into their required curriculum for freshmen (“The World for Women”, 2019). This curriculum, the Agnes Scott College Summit is comprised of two sections; the global learning and global journey, which teach students global education and leadership skills during their first year. The global learning section is for first year students to take during their fall semester where professors teach a leadership curriculum through workshops and labs. Students learn about other cultures and ways to navigate the world while having the opportunity to choose a program or discipline to learn about more in depth that they are interested in.

During their second semester, students engage on a global journey. This section allows students to have immersion experiences, study abroad, and learn more information about the discipline that they chose. Students have the freedom to choose their advisory committees who will help them along the process. The professors have unique interests and areas of expertise that they provide to students to help them choose their faculty advisors who will assist them through the program. The global journey is a week-long cultural immersion where students travel to a

destination particular to their section with their faculty advisor. The goal is to incorporate what they have learned in the global gateway section to real life and to prepare them for future independent study abroad programs and critical conversations through their educational journey (“The World for Women”, 2019). Aside from securing a passport and money for personal expenses, the program is completely free to the students.

Their most recent data on students who have studied abroad show that 48% of students study abroad for credit in over 40 countries (the class of 2015 – throughout their 4 years). To learn more about the students who are taking advantage of this opportunity and have access to this first-year program, I reviewed the school profile. Agnes Scott has a high acceptance rate of about 70%, and 64% of their overall student population identify as students of color. However, the data is very ambiguous because there is not a breakdown of the specific races at the institution.

Institutions of higher education are creating these global experiences for students to build a student population of global and national leaders, critical thinkers and innovators. It is important for students to be exposed to international experiences that will help broaden their perspectives on life and equip them with life-long skills that they can use in multiple settings.

Furthermore, Strayhorn (2012) analyzes the importance of “belonging” and how having a sense of belonging leads to positive emotions. According to Strayhorn, belonging is a basic human need; the positive emotions that accompany belonging include: happiness, achievement, higher functioning and is consistent with positive health and psychological outcomes (Strayhorn, 2012). Previous research on Black students and their sense of belonging is mostly on Black men (Harper, 2012; 2015), but I plan to explore the sense of belonging among the participants in this study at their current institutions.

While there is not a monolith for understanding Black women's experiences of success in college, this study focuses on how international travel in high school influences Black women college experiences through a qualitative phenomenological study. The research question guiding the current study is: how do international travel experiences in high school influence college experiences for Black women?

Some aspects of international travel to consider in this study are financial status, the international experiences of immediate family members (or the absence of these experiences), resources for international travel offered at the high school level, and access to this knowledge. I will explore these considerations in the demographic questionnaire before beginning the interviews.

Recommendations

Considering the literature on the benefits of international travel for students (VanHoof & Verbeteen, 2005; Walker & Thomas, 2011; Angweni, 2014; Dietz, 2018), higher education institutions implementing global education in their curriculum ("The World for Women, 2019; "Harvard Worldwide", 2019; "Gordon-Zeto", n.d.), and the need for research on the influence on international travel in high school (IIE, 2014; Penn & Tanner, 2009), I have outlined recommendations for school counselors wanting to incorporate international travel into their comprehensive counseling programs.

These recommendations are designed to help guide school counselors on their journey to implementing international programs. While these recommendations are critical for our Black girls in high school, it is not a requirement for a comprehensive counseling program, and applying these recommendations will look different at every school. There are ten

recommendations for how this study will be useful to school counselors, which are outlined below.

First, school counselors use the findings of this study to consider incorporating international travel experiences into the comprehensive counseling program. This study is looking at the influence of international exposure on college experiences for Black women. One of the roles of the school counselor is to help students on their post-graduate journeys. Data reveals that Black women are attending college at disproportionately lower rates than their peers (IIE, 2014). School counselors can begin to help increase those rates by helping Black women in high school gain international experiences that will positively impact them.

Next, in order to provide access to international travel experiences, various sponsors and travel programs should either create opportunities for Black women to travel abroad and assist with fund-raising or apply for grants that will provide Black girls in high school the opportunity to engage in these enriching experiences. International travel is very expensive, and it can send a message to families that cannot afford travel that these trips are not for them. Specifically, this financial burden can be a significant challenge for Black women. Current travel programs that are implemented in high school, such as the Rotary Club and travel programs in foreign language departments should create more opportunities for Black women who cannot afford to go on these trips. Additionally, current travel programs in high school should collaborate with school counselors to identify Black girls in the school who would benefit from an international experience.

Third, school counselors should begin to analyze the emotional and personal benefits that international travel has on Black women. School counselors work with students through their academic, personal and social challenges. This research will look at the various themes that arise

in the interviews with the participants. Using this research and high school international travel programs, school counselors should consider how international travel can positively influence the emotional and personal status of Black girls. Furthermore, high school counseling programs should review the positive outcomes of international travel for college and graduate school students to help build similar programs for high school students. Earlier, I outlined some of the global education programs that are imbedded into their institutions' curriculum for students and how students are benefiting from those experiences (e.g. Spelman College, Harvard University, Agnes Scott College). Using the research from colleges and graduate programs, school counselors can advocate for Black girls by explaining the importance of implementing an international experience or program in high school.

The fifth recommendation that school counselors should consider is collaborating with faculty, administrators and staff across the K-12 pipeline to collectively learn about the benefits of international travel for students so that they can serve as mentors to Black girls in high school. Learning about the benefits of international travel and the disproportionate rates of international travel for Black students can help emphasize why global engagement is important and why it is important, especially for Black girls. This research could potentially help build funded international programs for Black girls. Next, researchers should use the results found in this current study on how international travel in high school influences college experiences for Black women to broaden the scope of international travel to middle school. Additionally, researchers can use the literature on benefits of international travel to create programs in elementary school that will prepare students for international experiences in middle and high school.

The seventh recommendation is for school counselors to connect with Black women who have traveled internationally to encourage them to share their experiences with Black girls who

may feel that international travel is not for them. This conversation with Black women to Black girls in high school can build a long-term mentor relationship. These mentorships are critical to the development of Black women (Fries-Britt, 2002; Edwards, Beverly & Alexander-Snow, 2011; Strayhorn, 2012; Patton et al., 2016).

A critical consideration for school counselors working with high school students is that they are minors and will need parent permission for any travel experiences. Furthermore, parents will need to also understand the importance of international travel and what their daughters could gain from these experiences. The eighth recommendation is for school counselors to work with faculty, administrators, and staff to incorporate various international travel opportunities in parent nights and allow time for parents to understand the importance of these opportunities. This addition to family engagement will help parents encourage their daughters to apply for available programs and potentially encourage parents themselves to travel internationally as well.

Next, counselors should conduct further research with Black girls who are travelling abroad in high school to understand their experiences and share them with those who would contribute to the literature and advancement of global education. There is a dearth of literature for international travel in high school for Black girls. This current study is only the beginning of the international research that will contribute to the field. The goal of this study is not only to learn about how international travel influences college experiences, but also encourage further research in the field.

Finally, readers of this study should share this research with stakeholders in education to help increase the number of Black women and girls who are taking advantage of study abroad opportunities. This research will contribute to the literature and create opportunities for Black

women and girls around the country. The literature and research will also help address the disparity of Black girls traveling internationally.

These recommendations are charged to school counselors to help our Black women and girls attain higher levels in education and life through collaboration with educators, faculty, staff, administrators, researchers, community and family members. Furthermore, these recommendations will help build stronger counseling programs and Black students who have a broader perspective on life, better sense of self, understanding of their cultures, and greater appreciation for others' cultures and perspectives. These qualities will allow students to integrate into new environments and gain the "sense of belonging" that previous research yields positive emotions (Strayhorn, 2012). This study is going to explore how these factors influence college experiences, but specifically, how international travel in high school influences college experiences for Black women.

Summary

In this chapter, I provide a review of previous literature that will contribute to the current study on international travel in high school and college experiences for Black women. First, I provide an introduction that addresses the reason why this study is critical for Black women and girls. Next, I provide literature that discusses how Black women and girls define success, current travel experiences for Black women, and the need for more college access for Black girls. Furthermore, I outline the Experiential Learning Model and how it relates to the way that students engaging in international travel will learn and grow. Finally, I provide recommendations for school counselors to incorporate international experiences into a comprehensive counseling program, collaborate with the community and educators to build programs, advocate for funded travel and create opportunities for Black girls in high school.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Phenomenology is a research tradition intended to discover and describe the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences, or knowledge, as it appears to consciousness (Hays & Singh, 2012). In this tradition, it is important that, as the researcher, I have a personal perspective and experiences in relation to this study and that I am careful not to interpret what the participants are sharing, but allow the essence of their experiences transpire in this study.

My perspective on international travel and college success is based upon my experiences traveling as a Black high school student and struggling through the college process as a first-generation college student. Previous research concludes that research on international education must include and analyze the perceptions of students (VanHoof & Verbeeten, 2005). With this study, it was important to keep this consideration in mind and stay true to this tradition under Black feminist thought (BFT) (Collins, 2000). While I am committed to this topic because of my personal experiences with international travel and education, honoring this tradition, it was important I did not allow my personal experiences to influence my perspective on the experiences of the Black women in the study, but instead use it to inform the study.

My personal experiences informed the way I studied and analyzed the data, but I am intentional about the ways that it influenced the study. Writing about this in my positionality was an essential step in this process. Writing this statement helped me understand my experience, my outlook on this phenomenon, what I thought I might find, and any biases that I had to be present with the participants. Hays & Singh (2012) explain the concept of *epoche*, which refers to understanding the human experience by setting aside prior explanations of phenomena found in literature and bracketing the researcher's values and assumptions regarding the phenomena.

Phenomenology values the participant's story, which is congruent with Black feminist theory. Working in this tradition under this theory allowed me to understand the phenomenon of what Black women are experiencing.

Locke and Bailey's (2014) text exploring various cultures in counseling explored a phenomenon that I have considered with this current study, while providing tools for positive and productive relationships among culturally diverse populations. The chapter on African Americans explains the Black Americans' paradoxical experience of hardship and uncertainty, and simultaneous accomplishment and determination (Locke & Bailey, 2014). Furthermore, scholars such as Dr. Lori Patton Davis (2009) and Bell Hooks (2000) describe the experiences of Black students who face challenges with intersecting identities of race and gender, the significance of Black women in education, the importance of having Black women as mentors and the challenges that come with finding Black women in academia.

The phenomenon of Black women's experience with hardship in college is what I explored with the participants of this study. In addition to the African American experience that Locke and Bailey (2014) discuss in their text, I expected to find a phenomenon that surrounds broken communities for individual gain and success. However, I learned about the phenomena of international travel as it pertains to each women's standpoint, as Collins (2000) described within Black Feminist Thought. In addition to the research tradition that I am using for this study, I used a framework that is shaped by the experiences of Black women and explores the challenges of race, gender, marginalization, and other struggles and challenges that Black women face (Collins, 2000; Henry, Butler, & West, 2011). This framework supports the current study on Black women and stories about their international travel experiences.

Black Feminist Thought

This study is undergirded by Black Feminist Thought, as it addresses the saliency of race and gender for Black women (Collins, 2000). Black Feminist Thought allows the participants to tell their story, without any subjective biases or translations involved. Black Feminist Thought acknowledges the interlocking systems of oppression for Black women and focuses on their collective experiences (Collins, 2000; 2015). Since this research explores the essence of Black women's experiences in high school and college, it is critical to use a lens that acknowledges systems of oppression, while also valuing the agency, activism, and advocacy of Black women. Black Feminist Thought also provides space, safety, and support for Black women while centering their experiences.

Further, Black Feminist Thought is an important aspect of this study because traditional (western) theories exclude those who are not respected in our society, which reinforces social relations and domination (Collins, 2000; 2015). Through this research, I do not want the participants to experience this marginalizing phenomenon while sharing their stories. Collins (2015) explains how oppressed groups share experiences of being the "only one" or "one of the good ones" in various settings, but this dynamic only surfaces if their speech, interactions, and ways of being with others are *comfortable* to the dominant group.

Black Feminist Thought reflects women's lived experiences within the intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and religion (Collins, 2000; 2015). Intersectionality critical to this current research on the success of Black women and the influence of international travel in high school. Black Feminist Thought was created with the stories of many African American women. Collins discusses that if only a few exceptional Black women have been able to create theory homogenizes African American women and silences the

majority (Collins, 2000; 2015). Black Feminist Thought can offer a different view of ourselves and our worlds and stimulate a new consciousness that utilizes Black Women's everyday knowledge. Furthermore, BFT affirms, rearticulates, and provides a vehicle for expressing consciousness in public (Collins, 2000). For the purpose of this study, I allowed my participants to share their experiences and rearticulate their perspective of being successful in college, while also sharing their experiences.

In an article written by Collins (1986), she discusses the marginal positions that Black women have held in academic settings, resulting in a need to, "make creative use of their marginality." Congruently, across disciplines, this same phenomenon is evident. Mason (2006) discusses the importance of the Black feminist perspective in order to transform knowledge of students who are not being taught about Black women in history, such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Dorothy Height. Not learning about these women and their journeys in the history books, undergraduate curricula, and in graduate studies, is detrimental to the Nation's education, especially Black women who are working in academia or in other disciplines. The stories and testimonies of our ancestors give us the strength to push through systems of oppression. The essence of what this acquisition of knowledge does to Black women and how it influences their decisions to apply and stay in college is why I chose to use a phenomenological tradition.

The five dimensions that characterize Black feminist thought are: core themes of a Black woman's standpoint, variation of responses to course themes, the interdependence of experiences and consciousness, consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint and the interdependence of thought and action (Jackson, 1998; Collins, 2000). Additionally, the core themes of BFT are analyzing Black women's work (e.g. labor market victimization), challenging

controlling images, self-definition, sexual politics of Black womanhood, Black women's love and relationships, Black women and motherhood, and Black women activism. Within each theme, Collins (2000) provides a historical context to this theory and our work with Black women.

In this current study, I explored the way that these Black women define themselves, their stories, and remember the experiences that they have had in high school and as they are matriculating through college. Collins (2000) shares the way that Black women's consciousness is critical to the development and progression of our culture. Black women's consciousness is outlined in four ideas, the importance of self-definition, the significance of self-valuation and respect, the necessity of self-reliance and independence, and the centrality of a changed self to personal empowerment.

She explores these ideas using three safe spaces (relationships with other Black women, Black women's blues, and Black women writers) for Black women that allow us to work towards our own self-definition. Which, in her text (Collins, 2000), is defined as rejecting the assumptions that those with power have interpreted. These three safe spaces were explored in the way that Black women's relationships with one another foster a sense of community and belonging where we are sharing knowledge essential to survival, art and music as a form of expression and activism, and navigating spaces in higher education, corporations, and the job market as a Black woman (Collins, 2000).

Furthermore, self-definition is not about separation from others, but defining self in the context of family and community. Collins refers to the Black woman's "standpoint" as a group of Black women and their ideals. In working towards self-definition, we are fostering action and

bringing about social change (Collins, 2000). In this current study, there are two themes that center the ideas of self-definition and social change, which I will discuss in chapter five.

Furthermore, Collins (2000) outlines the distinguishing features of BFT as it pertains to U.S. Black women because of the new obstacles and ever-changing social status, definition of terms (e.g. naming Black women knowledge, tension, etc.) and political changes that U.S. Black women face daily. These six distinguishing factors of BFT (Collins, 2000) are empowerment of African-American women within the context of social justice by intersecting oppressions (p.26), despite the common challenges confronting U.S. Black women as a group, diverse responses to these core themes, which characterize Black women's group knowledge or "standpoint" (p.29), connections between U.S. Black women's experiences as a heterogenous collectivity (p.33); contributions of African-American women intellectuals (p.37); everchanging society (e.g. social change, political systems, etc.) (p.43); and Black women's struggles as part of a wider struggle for human dignity, empowerment, and social justice (p.46). The distinguishing factors are specific for U.S. Black women, which apply to the women that I have interviewed in this study.

These features inform this current study by guiding the thought behind the interview questions that though Black women may share common experiences, every woman will have a unique story. Additionally, without addressing the intersecting identities of Black women, we cannot be fully empowered. Collins (2000) states, "U.S. Black women's collective historical experiences with oppression may stimulate a self-defined Black women's standpoint that in turn can foster Black women's activism" (p.33). My goal for this study is to create opportunities for more Black women based on the collective experiences of these Black women and girls in high school and college.

Both the theory and research tradition posited here, center the experiences of the participants. One of the difficult tasks of the researcher is to bracket my subjectivity, previous literature reviews and studies, and other knowledge about a phenomenon that I may have to fully allow the participant to share in their story. However, bracketing these things is critical in this research because I am looking for a phenomenon and while every woman's experience is different, there may be similar themes. I used the five dimensions, the distinguishing features of BFT for U.S. Black women, and the core themes of BFT to inform my interview protocol and this overall study.

Procedure and Participants

The participants were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling. I recruited from Black Doctorate Students' networks, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), social media platforms and recommendations from my colleagues. I went through three phases of recruitment because majority of the women who were interested in the study were not college students or had only traveled internationally in college and beyond. It was challenging to find participants who identified as Black women, who are current college students and who traveled abroad internationally in high school.

Many of the interested participants who have traveled internationally were either in graduate school, only traveled after high school or were not current students, which are recommendations for future research, which I list in chapter five. More than twenty-five women were interested in the study and wanted more information, but many were ineligible. Due to the challenges during recruitment, I considered altering my participation criteria, but I wanted to stay true to this study, so I continued to search for eligible participants. The challenges I encountered are congruent with the research that says that Black students are not traveling at the same rates as

other races (Nahal, 2012; NCES, 2013; IIE, 2014). This is also congruent with the lack of research on the students who are traveling in high school specifically (IIE, 2014).

Originally, the participants were going to be Black women attending college's in Georgia, but I recruited participants from Hampton, Tuskegee, Georgia State, Spelman, Northeastern, and North Carolina A&T University. The variety in colleges that these women attended contributed to the diversity of the experiences that they shared about their college journeys. Additionally, the participants are all at different stages of their college process, I interviewed two first year students, two second year students, two third year students, three fourth year students and one fifth year student. This diversity provided a well-rounded perspective on their college experiences and their overall journey.

The participants identified as Black or African American women who are in college and had international experiences in high school. For the purpose of this study, international experiences included study abroad, volunteer programs, experiential learning programs, family vacations, and any other experience where the student traveled internationally. The only stipulation was that they must have traveled for at least five days internationally. The interviews lasted between 45- 180 minutes depending on the participant and her story. The interviews were originally set to occur in person but conducting the interviews via Zoom video chat was the most convenient for the participants and their schedules. All interviews were both audio and video recorded through zoom, with consent from the participant (Appendix D).

After we finished the interviews, I transcribed the interview using a transcription software called "Temi." I then reviewed every transcript to check for errors, to ensure that what was said was transcribed accurately and verbatim. Once the transcripts were complete, I sent the transcripts to the participants to review and approve for accuracy. I used this data to search for

common themes. In order to search for those themes, I re-read the transcripts to find codes within the participants' interviews, which is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes data and attributes meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of the analytic process (Saldana, 2016). After coding the data, I categorized the codes into categories and used those categories to develop themes, which leads to the overall essence of this research study.

During this process, it is critical to ensure that, as the researcher, one is not skipping steps to develop the themes of the study. It is easy to read the transcripts and find themes that stand out, but one must begin with the codes so that one does not potentially miss data that is critical to the study. In order to ensure that I did not create categories prematurely, I was sure to make memos in the margins about what I noticed in the interviews, which is also known as analytic memos (Saldana, 2016).

This data analyzation process is done in several cycles because the first cycle of coding typically does not capture all the data (Saldana, 2016). Transcribing the transcripts and writing memos on the interviews was my first review of the data. My second cycle was going through and looking for the codes and writing them down. These codes ranged from one word to a sentence. At the end of my coding process, I had one hundred and fifteen codes, which I divided into categories. I then divided those categories into themes, which I discuss in chapter 4.

Study Instruments: Demographic Sheet, Interview Protocol, and Researcher Subjectivity

I use three instruments in this study. There is a demographic survey (see Appendix A), which includes questions on participants' international travel experiences in high school, information about their family's financial and education history, the participants' current progress in college, definitions of college success, and overall high school and collegiate experiences. The second instrument is the semi-structured interview protocol including twenty-

six interview questions (see Appendix B). I structured the questions in their interview protocol and used the questions to guide the interview. The questions are aligned with Black feminist theory (Collins, 2000), my research tradition, and the intersection of race and gender. Examples of interview protocol questions are, “tell me about your high school experiences as a Black girl,” “describe your college experiences as a Black woman,” “ what have you gained from international travel,” “what does success mean to you, and what motivates you to succeed?” I developed these questions, because it helped guide the participants to explain their essence of their high school, college and international experiences. The interview protocol is used as a guide in the interview, but depending on the interview, I would ask additional follow up questions to the participants’ responses to learn more about their experiences. I learned something different about each interview and would either add or re-organize the interview protocol as I saw fit.

Researcher Subjectivity

The third instrument is the subjectivity that I have as the primary researcher in this study. I grew up all around the world and had the opportunity to work with people from various cultures, while learning different traditions, perspectives, and experiences that I was going to carry with me throughout life. As a military child, I had the privilege and access to these opportunities, and it shaped the way that I viewed life and education. I was born in Guam, and spent a lot of my childhood in Yokosuka, Japan. I traveled and lived in two other countries and four states in between that time. During my 10th grade school year, I experienced my first culture shock when I moved to Atlanta, Georgia. My whole world shifted when I moved to a city that was full of people who looked like me. I lived in a suburban neighborhood on the “Publix side of Cascade” as we used to call it on the southside of Atlanta, commonly known as the “SWAT.”

Despite the significant number of Black people who live in the city of Atlanta, we were very segregated by socioeconomic status and race throughout the state of Georgia.

I went to school in the inner-city and quickly learned that my education over-seas and my experiences positioned me ahead of my peers. I did not know or understand how to process that dynamic at the time, but I never felt like I could fit in. I felt like I was an outsider who desperately wanted to fit in because I was finally around people who looked just liked me. I was in a school where I thought I could be myself, but I truly could not. I was different. My peers would constantly ask, “Do you speak English, I heard you speak “Japan”,” and I didn’t know how to respond. My initial thoughts were that they had to be joking with me because they wanted to see my reaction. However, they were not. It was a genuine question because they wanted to know more about who I was, and they never met anyone who lived outside of the United States. I never spoke much until I found my niche. I thrive off social interactions and needed that to feel comfortable in my new setting. It took a while, but I began to join different athletic teams and the school marching and concert band, where I made new friends and experienced the culture of going to school in Atlanta.

When I lived overseas, I never imagined that I could be at the top of my class. Generally, the top of the class did not consist of Black students. It was not something that we ever talked or worried about. In retrospect, it was not something that teachers or counselors would share with us either. I thought the other students were smarter than I was, and I never considered becoming valedictorian or salutatorian, until I moved to Atlanta. A couple weeks after enrolling in my new high school in Atlanta, my school counselor told me that I was at the top of the class. When she told me that information, I was instantly inspired. I still remember the feelings of pure joy,

gratitude, inspiration, motivation, encouragement and excitement that I experienced as this validation. I began to think about the infinite possibilities at my fingertips.

Before moving to Atlanta, I never thought much about college. I always thought that I would graduate from my high school in Japan and go to college in Tokyo. I did not even know much about the college in Tokyo, but it was the only perspective I had of college. At the time, my mom was retiring in Japan, so I thought that was the last move. I never met with my school counselor in Japan, I am not even sure whether we had one. Therefore, I did not have the important conversations about opportunities and options for my future. Our student enrollment was approximately one thousand students. My teachers never talked about college or what life for me could look like after high school. There was never any push for me to apply for internships or programs that would give me the experience and network that I would need in life. My encouragement came from the students that I saw going to school on Saturday's, the Japanese students who lived outside of the navy base. I was always interested in their drive for education, the advanced technology, the quality of life, and the thirst for knowledge.

As a first-generation college student, my parents did not know what the college application process would be like or what I had to do to be successful. My mom just knew to make sure that we stayed involved and worked hard to obtain good grades in school. My mom always encouraged me to work hard and to be number one at everything we do. I knew that as a Black woman, I had to work twice as hard to be noticed in any field. As a current high school counselor, not receiving any information from the faculty at the school I attended, stationed on the navy base was not acceptable. I am grateful for a support system at home who pushed me to put forth 100% in everything that I do and to learn about the culture wherever we moved. I had to learn to adapt everywhere I went.

It was not until I moved to Atlanta that I began to understand how much learning about other cultures and learning how to adapt to various environments influenced my life. I also learned that I was at a disadvantage at my previous school in Japan because there was not anyone to help me along my college preparation journey. I had good relationships with my teachers, but no one encouraged me to push myself. No one helped me explore my options or told me that I had a bright future. I felt invisible, like I was just going to school because it was something that I had to do. Luckily, I enjoyed school. I loved learning, so it made my experiences in school enjoyable. However, if I did not have the support from my parents, the world outside of the navy base to explore and the various places that we would travel, I would never be where I am today.

In Atlanta, my school counselor had faith in me. She knew I was different and wanted to help me reach my full potential. She connected me with mentors who showed me different schools in Atlanta, invited me on college tours, and exposed me to a culture that I did not have any knowledge about – my own. I knew a lot about other cultures, which broadened my perspective on everything that I learned, but I did not know much about Black culture. I did not have the confidence in myself that I needed to feel successful. My personal definition of success is to be genuinely happy, attain personal and career goals, and to be financially fit. My personal, academic, career, and financial areas of life are key aspects to being successful, which ultimately leads to being genuinely happy.

I always knew that my mom wanted me to go to college and to be successful, but we were not sure how. Moving to Atlanta exposed everything that I was missing from my other schooling experiences. Most of my peers had never been outside of highway 285, the inner loop of Atlanta. The thought of moving to Florida or even two hours away was absurd to a lot of my

friends. I would always share stories about my experiences overseas and to my peers, who would explain to me how unattainable international travel felt. In addition to international travel, college and success felt unattainable to them as well. A lot of students spent their time in the classroom doing everything outside of learning. There were times when we had teachers who were not even qualified to teach the subject, but we were still required to take exams that we knew we did not have a chance to pass if we did not teach ourselves the material. I remember feeling so sad that the mindset of my peers was so narrow, as there were so many opportunities that we would receive because we went to a title I school, but they were not taking advantage of them because they felt like it did not apply to them. I found it hard to connect with anyone.

I knew opportunities were huge because I never saw the number of scholarships, college tours, mentoring programs, and internships offered at school when I lived in Japan. I knew that these resources were not something that I could pass up, and I was not going to let them pass me by without trying first. My international experiences directly affected the way that I viewed education, success, opportunities and my passions in life. These experiences shaped me into the person that I am today.

Data Collection

I am using Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) to guide this current study. Black feminist thought centers the experiences for Black women (Collins, 2000). Under this theory, it is critical that I, as the researcher am fully engaged throughout the data collection process. I conducted ten interviews that lasted from 45-180 minutes in length and were held virtually via Zoom, to ensure that I, the researcher, was fully engaged in the interview.

The participants and I were able to interact via Zoom video chat, which allowed us to interact with each other on a deeper level than if the interviews were over the phone. I was able

to see the expressions of the participants, ask additional questions to learn more about their stories when necessary, and allow the participants to see me and feel comfortable with the interview. I used interactive interviewing (Hays & Singh, 2012), which encourages intentional conversation between the researcher and participant. The interviews were audio-recorded, and I would journal before and after the interview to record my thoughts going into the interview and my feelings after the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured (Creswell, 2007) and participants received a demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) before their scheduled interviews to provide a foundation going into the interview. There are several factors to consider (e.g. financial status, family backgrounds, current college attending, previous high school attended, etc.), which were included in the demographic questionnaire (Appendix A).

For the purposes of this study, I am using a phenomenological research tradition, which explores a specific phenomenon among participants. The phenomena that was explored with the interview protocol (Appendix B) are international experiences in high school and college, definitions of success, and experiences as Black women (e.g. challenges, high school experiences as a Black woman, college experiences).

It is critical to remember that each experience is different depending on the demographic factors. For example, a Black woman in college who attends an Historically White Institution (HWI) and studies abroad, will have a very different experience from a Black woman in college who attends an Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Additionally, the country where the student travels and her journey to that country will influence her experience. Furthermore, I bracketed my experiences and emotional connections the study to successfully collect interview data (Hays & Singh, 2012). I spent time engaging in a process called reflexive

journaling (Carcary, 2009), where I would write my prior assumptions and biases. Additionally, I kept a journal specifically for the interview process to keep track of how each interview went, what I learned, how I felt entering the interview and what I felt afterwards. I have learned much from the participants in this study about their differences and various ways that international travel has impacted their lives.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I clarified the steps of the phenomenological process. In step 1, I documented my assumptions of this study in my subjectivity statement and in my researcher journal before beginning the data collection process because assumptions can permeate the data analysis process. This process is called bracketing (Hays & Singh, 2012). Once the assumptions were documented, I scheduled an initial call with each participant individually before the interview to begin establishing trust by reviewing the purpose of the study, my intentionality, the interview and data analysis process as well as to answer any outstanding questions they had. This initial meeting occurred at different times before the interview, to allow the participants time to consider whether they wanted to continue with the interview or any other concerns that they may have had.

Next, I conducted the interview of the first participant. This interview lasted 60 minutes and was audio-recorded. To be completely present during the interview, I wrote in my researcher journal directly after and transcribed the interview, while searching for codes. The codes were found by pulling keywords and phrases that the participants shared in the interview. Throughout this process, I created prompts to respond to in my researcher journal to ensure that I am consciously analyzing data, recording my thoughts (e.g. what I noticed during the interview, body language, immediate responses, etc.) and capturing the experiences of these women.

Upon transcription, I re-read the transcript and continued to write in my researcher journal. While re-reading the transcripts, I wrote notes in the margin that later contributed to the coding process. After transcribing each transcript, I sent the transcript to the participant to ensure accuracy.

In the fourth step, after receiving approval from the participants, I continued to search for codes in the interview. Since I did not have a research team, I read through the transcripts multiple times to ensure that I did not miss any of the nonoverlapping examples in the interviews, using a process called horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007). This process was extensive because I repeated the first three steps after each interview. This is a recursive process, where a new participant informs the previous data collected (Singh & McKleroy, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Once the interviews and transcripts were complete, I continued to search for codes; which is meant to organize the data during the data analysis process (Creswell, 2007). I created a codebook of meaning units (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994), using words and phrases from the interviews to search for the commonalities among the participants and new information that came up in each interview.

Next, I used the meaning units in the codebook to create the textual descriptions of their experiences, to begin categorizing the data. The categories were created to reflect on their collective meanings (Saldana, 2018). In the fifth step, I reviewed the eleven categories that I developed from the codebook, the meaning units, textual descriptions, and transcripts to create themes by grouping the related statements and meanings together (Creswell, 2007). Finally, using the phenomenological process listed above, I used the categories, themes, and meaning units to describe the essence of international travel and college experiences for this study.

Trustworthiness

This research is important to me and to Black girls and women. I ensured that the participants felt heard, valued, and supported. Research about Black girls and women is sensitive to our community and culture because of the lack of literature. It is critical that during the interviews, Black girls and women feel safe and comfortable to share their personal experiences and thoughts. In addition to the call that I had with the participants before their interview, I met with each participant concluding the interview to discuss their feedback, thoughts, and discuss next steps.

I bracketed my thoughts when working with the participants and while looking for themes in the transcript. Bracketing occurred by reviewing the assumptions that I recorded, reviewing and understanding my definition of success, and writing in my researcher journal. Furthermore, when transcribing the interview, I removed anything that would identify the participants and used pseudonyms that the participants chose on the demographic questionnaire. I also consulted with participants to ensure that they agree with everything that was in the transcript and make revisions as necessary. In order to consult with my participants, I utilized member-checking and sent them a copy of the transcript so that they could ensure that I wrote exactly what they shared in the interviews. If there was anything that I missed or misinterpreted, I requested that the participants shared that with me, and I made the necessary changes. Finally, I wrote a critical reflection of the study in addition to the conclusion of the study and included my reflection from my researcher journal (Appendix E). Following the completion of my dissertation, I will share the final study with all participants so that they can read the research that they are a part of.

Research Considerations

To understand the limitations of a study, researchers outline the constraints or restrictions of the study due to various factors. To label this study as a limitation goes against the theoretical framework and methodology of this work that centers the experiences of these Black women. Here, instead, are the considerations for this study. This qualitative study is specific to the Black women who were interviewed and cannot be applied to *all* Black women who have traveled internationally in high school. The ten participants of this study have shared their stories of struggle, defeat, success, travel, and more. Their stories provide us with valuable information about ways that international travel in high school has influenced their college experiences, outlook on success, and future career goals. Within this research, I learned more about these experiences and ways that researchers can continue to gather data on the importance of international travel for Black girls.

Furthermore, this research is based on the stories of these self-identified heterosexual, cisgender women, which is not inclusive of transgender, bisexual, queer, lesbian and gay individuals who would share different experiences to contribute to the study. Additionally, this research specifically focused on the experiences for Black women because of the dearth of literature on study abroad for Black girls in high school. This research was not conducted to compare the experiences of Black boys but aims to focus on ways to mobilize our Black girls through international travel. Monique Morris (2018) writes about the criminalization of Black Girls in schools in *Pushout* and discusses in her foreword the ways that well-intentioned people unconsciously harbor deep cultural biases about our Black girls. She writes, “How can we mobilize for our daughters if we can’t even see them?” (Morris, Coneth & Harris-Perry, xvi, 2018). Being able to see our Black girls and why this work is important is critical to the nature of

this study and the Black feminist thought framework. This research contributes to the literature on international travel, creates opportunities for future research, provides recommendations for educators, and honors the voices of the ten participants of this study.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methodology of the study. Using a phenomenological research tradition and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) framework, I have outlined the purpose behind using this tradition and theory for this study with Black women and included my positionality statement on why I am doing this work. Furthermore, I outlined how I recruited participants, collected and analyzed data, the research considerations and remained trustworthy throughout the process.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Study abroad has been widely considered critical in developing students' global competence and college and career readiness (Walker, Bukenya, & Thomas, 2011; Veral, 2017; "The World for Women", 2019; Fox, 2019). However, study abroad participation has generally been higher for white students than for students of color, and for students in affluent schools than for those in economically disadvantaged schools (IIE, 2014; Engel, 2019). Programs across the country have sought to create opportunities for students to become global leaders but have not focused on the disparity between those who are granted the opportunity and those who are not (Desoff, 2006; Henry, Butler & West, 2011; Miller, 2017; Jones, 2006; IIE, 2014). Research supports the theory that study abroad has many positive aspects (Henbroff & Rusz, 1993; Angwenyi, 2014; Desoff, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2006; 2011; Smith & Mrozek, 2016), but we [educators] are doing our students an injustice by not ensuring that all students are taking advantage of these opportunities. The research question for this study is, how do international travel experiences in high school influence college experiences for Black women?

The ten Black women participants of this study have shared their personal experiences with travel, education, intersectionality, familial and personal challenges during a semi-structured interview. The interview centered the Black experiences as it relates to each individual under the Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) framework, using a phenomenological approach to understand the essence of international travel for Black women. Their interviews yielded one hundred and fifteen codes, which were divided into eleven categories. Those categories yielded six themes that I will discuss in this chapter.

As discussed in chapter three, the participants come from diverse backgrounds, attend various colleges and universities and are at different stages in their college process. At a glance, eighty percent of the participants either have future career aspirations abroad, have a major centering international studies, or plan to spend time preparing for their careers abroad (through study abroad programs, international medical programs, etc.). One hundred percent of the participants said that they have plans to continue to travel in the future, and seventy percent of the participants have participated in an international program after their first time traveling internationally.

Furthermore, forty percent of the participants are first generation students and there was an even split between household income. The median income in 2018 was \$63,179 (US Census Bureau, 2019) and fifty percent of the participants were either at or above the median income, while the other fifty percent were low-income households. This information is important to the current study because literature tells us that finances are a barrier to international travel (Desoff, 2006; Henry, Butler & West, 2011; Miller, 2017; Jones, 2006). The US Census Bureau (2019) discloses that the poverty rate in America is 11.8%, but for Black female households the poverty rate is 31.7%. These rates highlight the disproportions among Black families. The participants of this study spoke about their motivation to finish college and their desire succeed in life, which includes being able to do better for themselves, their families and their children. The aforementioned statistics of the Black women in this study provide a small context and background for the women who were interviewed. Their voices and stories are present in the upcoming themes.

The coding process is critical in the phenomenological approach because codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story (Saldana, p.9, 2018). During this

process, I searched for codes that were essential within the participants' statements. I developed these codes while analyzing the transcripts, using a recursive process where every transcript informed the following interview. Out of the one hundred and fifteen codes, thirty-one of the codes appeared the most (meaning that multiple participants shared the same codes in their interviews). I then used those codes to create categories based on the information that was prevalent in multiple interviews. The eleven categories are: (1) travel and success, (2) career goals, (3) college experience, (4) high school experience, (5) family, (6) motivation, (7) mentorship, (8) belongingness, (9) racial identity, (10) tokenism and (11) the African Diaspora. Within each category, there were several codes that informed the group, some of the codes overlapped in multiple categories. These categories informed the six themes:

1. I Am Not Afraid Anymore; I Am A Global Citizen And Scholar
2. Definition Of *My* Black Womanhood
3. Umoja- "I Am Because We Are"
4. Reclamation Of Educational Space
5. Privilege Of Being Black Women
6. Redefinition Of Success

These themes use emic voice, which centers the experiences of the Black women in the study, congruent with BFT (Collins, 2000).

I Am Not Afraid Anymore; I Am A Global Citizen And Scholar

Transitioning from fear to travel, to explore, take on new opportunities, and go to college to being able to explain the ways that you are a global citizen and scholar is powerful. Fear was a common category among the participants in the aforementioned areas, including the fear of failure and gaining acceptance from their mothers. Some participants explained their own fears

with travel, while others discussed the way either their parents feared travel or created a sense of fear within them. Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000) shares the importance of the mother daughter relationship, as a safe space that is essential to survival. Though I did not directly ask the participants about the fears that they had in relation to family, the conversation came up in every interview. The participants shared the messages that their parents passed on to them about their fears of traveling, the danger and uncertainty around international travel. For some, this influenced their decisions on traveling initially, but later they learned ways to overcome this feeling. As Kaylani shared,

Don't be afraid to explore and see what else is out there. Be interested in other people's culture and things they do, because it is so interesting to see how other people work and how other places work and how they interact.

Traveling to a new place can be difficult at first. During the interviews, the participants shared ways that they overcame their fear and demonstrated faith during travel because of what they gained from their experiences. As Madison shared:

My first trip internationally was very young. I was 14, and it helped shape my idea and my thought process of like international travel, what it means to be a global citizen, and how that looks. It also changed my view and thought process on the stereotypes of what we think is happening abroad in certain places and what's actually happening, especially when I was in Africa. I was able to share space with my ancestors, which resonated more with me as I got older.

The Black women in this study shared ways that international travel has impacted their outlook on life, career goals, and mental health. In some ways, they had the opportunity to learn more in the time that they spent abroad than the time spent in the classroom. Giselle talked about how she

interacted with other students her age and was learning that they studied world history instead of the history of their home state and there was so much that she did not know. Her experience with that student encouraged her to study more about the world and travel more to learn in person, from real-life experiences. Giselle traveled to Brazil on a study abroad trip in college and had a deep connection with the land and people. She learned that they have a large population of people of African descent and studied Afro-Brazilian culture. Giselle shared,

When I was in the Amazon, I felt like I was connecting more, not like a higher power, but like I felt like I was...I felt like I was connecting spiritually more, I felt like my energy was in its best possible form.

This experience created a sense of identity for her, when she shared how she was often overlooked by her peers and educators. Giselle was in spaces where in most cases, the high school international trips required students to disconnect from social media and interact with each other. Armani and Mariana shared a similar experience, though they were both on two different trips at different times during the summer (Peru and Italy, respectively). Armani and Mariana share the appreciation they had while abroad below:

It was nice to just kind of take a step back and not be on our phones or not have to do this or that, to just kind of sit and acknowledge like the beauty in different cultures.

I feel like if I lived in another country, it would be probably better for my mental health and just staying calm and not being so anxious, living in the moment. Traveling abroad has allowed me to be fearless and to have faith knowing that I'll be okay regardless of what may be going on.

Mariana shared with me how she had a challenging educational experience, socially in high school and academically in college, but she has found peace within travel. In high school, Marianna had a hard time making friends because she felt different from those around her and she could never find quality friendships with people who shared the same goals and values. In college, Marianna felt like the professors did not care about her education because they were not genuine with the students.

Though Mariana was noticeably struggling academically, none of her professors would take the extra time to help her. Mariana disclosed that she experiences anxiety and depression. She shared how her international trip was one of the first times where she felt at peace. Currently, she goes to therapy and seeks additional international opportunities. In order to make these international experiences meaningful, Marianna chose a career where she would have structure, fulfillment, and the ability to travel, which led to her career pathway in dentistry. Marianna has already applied for a travel abroad program in Vietnam to work with patients under current dentists.

Marianna is attending a large public institution and her college experience has not been what she expected, but through her international travel experiences, she found quality friendships with people whom she can relate to and share similar values. To this day, Mariana is still friends with the girls that she went to travel abroad with in high school. In another interview, Ava shares her feelings, what she learned about herself and the ways that being present taught her life lessons of gratitude and experiential learning.

I was apprehensive at first because of everything that was happening abroad, but once I got there, I was happy. I was excited to be able to travel to another country, because not a lot of people have that luxury. I felt free. As a Black woman, it taught me to be

appreciative of what I have, because not a lot of people have traveled internationally. It taught me to be grateful and thankful and to not take anything for granted, because we can lose everything that we have in a split second. I gained a sense of being present and looking at things differently. The purpose of international travel is to get out of your comfort zone, because going into a different environment, introduces you to different things and it's going to teach you new things, and it might even help you learn stuff about you that you didn't know and just give you the opportunity to have fun and just enjoy the time that you are traveling.

All the participants planned to travel abroad again. Michelle used to hear the stories of her parents travel in the military, and it created a sense of urgency for her to travel and learn about these different cultures. Michelle plans to take the foreign service exam and has a long-term goal of running an embassy somewhere abroad. For Michaela, her Costa Rica trip consisted of major community service projects, which ignited her passion for community service. Her first time traveling was a huge deal because she had a lot to prove to herself and her mom. Michaela valued the relationship that she had with her parents, but it was challenging for her because her mom did not want her to travel and did not think that she was serious about fundraising for this opportunity. She wanted to prove to her mom that she was serious and that this trip was going to benefit her life. As she was fundraising, she gained a closer relationship with her dad because he had traveled before and he supported her along the way.

The process of preparing for the trip created the space for Michaela to build a relationship with her dad that had been broken for so long. Michaela disclosed how she held a grudge towards her dad because of things that he did in the past, but this was the first time that they were able to have an open and honest conversation about the way that she felt. Moreover, he was able

to share his travel experiences with her and encouraged her to keep working towards her goals. Learning how Michaela was able to rebuild a relationship with her dad and eventually work with her mom how serious she is about international travel and share with her the stories that she had about her trip. Furthermore, Michaela shared how she was excited to now take on more international travel opportunities in college.

Globalization is the broad economic, social, cultural and political revolution (Rubab, Aziz, Usman & Amjad, 2020) and to be a global citizen is to identify oneself as a citizen of the world, be aware of problems and issues of people around the world, and apply what was learned to your community (Rubab, et al., 2020). With this recent definition of globalization and global citizenship, these women of this current study exude the characteristics of what it means to be a global citizen. Furthermore, this article outlines how global citizenship is more than awareness, it influences behavioral changes that stem from critical engagement and will create students to be empathetic, politically just, and culturally aware (Rubab, et al., 2020). These women are constantly learning how to identify themselves in a world that has already pre-defined what it means to be Black *and* woman (Collins, 2000). The power in their stories about their transition to global citizens and scholars, demonstrate how international travel has benefitted them academically. Finally, Giselle demonstrates this transformation when she completely changed her career goals to a broader system, where she is able to use what she is learning in college and abroad to foster a better environment for others. Giselle states:

Seeing [how grateful they were with little] made me want to do something different from here on out. That's why I've been on this track of construction and civil engineering and wanting to change the infrastructure and things abroad.

All of the women in this study discussed the ways that their travel experiences have shaped their perspectives and views of themselves and the world. Their experiences made them want to become leaders in their respective fields, learn about other cultures, bring back what they've learned to their communities and engage with other Black women around the world. This scholarship is something that is not taught in the classroom, but through experiential learning (Chakravorty & Hales, 2017).

Definition Of *My Black Womanhood*

Black Womanhood, as explained in *Black Feminist Thought* (Collins, 2000), has been controlled by those who are not Black women and have created interpretations of what Black womanhood looks like through controlling images. Furthermore, how self-definition speaks to the power dynamics involved in rejecting externally, defined, controlling images of Black womanhood (Collins, 2000, p.126). Given the significance of self-definition, one of the interview questions explored what Blackness means by personal definition, to the participants. This is critical to the theory and tradition of this study, and to the experiences of these women and their journey to consciousness. The journey to consciousness “acknowledges the complexities of crosscutting relations of race, gender, class, and sexuality” (Collins, 2000, p.132), which looked different for each participant, but their process on how they self-defined Black womanhood were similar.

Throughout the interview process, Black womanhood was prevalent in their educational, travel, and personal experiences. Their perspectives on Black womanhood was centered in every theme because the participants could not separate being woman from being Black. The beauty of this theme is that it is the crux of this research. In a previous study, the researcher explored the effects that study abroad had on Black University women's sense of identity (Sol, 2014). Within

this research, the findings revealed that there was a powerful impact on Black women identities and that their study abroad experiences created shifts in the way that they understood their identity. The Black women of this current study shared ways that they began to learn more about their own identity, as well as those around them. Every participant identified as a Black woman, but every definition of what Black womanhood looks like, was different, and some participants shared the multiple intersecting identities that would complicate their idea of what being Black meant or how others perceived them. For example, Madison shared her frustrations of people who would question her race because of her lighter skin tone.

I don't really identify myself with being mixed. I identify as Black. I grew up in a Black household. I come from a Black mother. I don't identify as anything else, honestly, unless I have to identify as something else. My dad even questioned why I was going to an Historically Black College (HBCU) because he said that I was not really Black.

Madison continued to talk about the power and strength that she felt as a Black woman.

It's very powerful being a Black woman. I think a lot of people aren't able to really, really understand the magnitude of what being Black is. I think being Black is being able to find joy in that and still go through certain struggles and still be like, happy and being on top, even with everything that's going on within life and not just from society. I think a Black woman is so much more than just a statement or a grouping of being Black women, it's a mindset. It's not just the color of your skin because not all Black people look alike.

Madison had a unique journey to discovering that Blackness is not linear. She spent the first half of her life in New Orleans and the second half of her life in Atlanta, where she experienced two completely different Black cultures. It was not until she moved to Atlanta, where people often

questioned her Blackness because they would assume that she was either Creole or mixed with White. This misidentification frustrated and confused her because she had never been questioned before and never identified with anything else. Similarly, Ava experienced students in high school questioning her race because she is Black and Latina. It was not until others questioned her that she decided to learn more about her culture and how she identified but did not like the pressure of having to be labeled for the satisfaction of others. Ava described this experience, sharing:

I never really thought about being a biracial female. I think for me it was a lot of people wondering what I was mixed with. They could tell by the skin, I guess, but my skin tone was that I was Black. I mean, I am who I am.

Ava defined being Black womanhood as being powerful and being able to do anything regardless of others trying to make it difficult for you to succeed. On the contrary, Nico and Bailey shared the ways that they had challenges making friends because people around them were Black but didn't identify as such. Bailey went to a White prep high school where there were no Black teachers, and the students she thought she could relate to, were seemingly unaware of their Blackness. Bailey shares:

Both of my parents went to HBCU's, and my mom is a professor at that. So, I always like was racially conscious. Whereas, some of my other Black counterparts, they were kind of blind to that. So, I was in a weird position because I was always the one who was like speaking out.

Bailey felt alone in high school because she did not have the support from educators in the building who looked like her or understood her as a Black woman. Bailey spent a lot of time with her mom and her colleagues, because they were an example of Black women in leadership

positions and in education. When I asked Bailey her definition of being a Black woman, she answered:

It means being understood. It means having to be strong no matter what. It means having to work two times as hard as everyone else to get to where you want to go. Being a Black woman is making sure you act a certain way so that you're not perceived negatively. I am always hyper aware of things and my surrounds. Being a Black woman is Black girl magic.

This was Bailey's experience as a Black woman. Throughout her K-12 educational career, she spent her days working to keep up with her White peers. Bailey's parents were first generation students and wanted better for Bailey and would work hard so that she would not feel left out. Bailey was one out of ten Black students in her school.

Her ultimate goal in high school was to get accepted and attend Spelman College, so that she could have the sense of community that she longed for. In Nico's situation, she went to a small private high school in Georgia that was all Black. She felt comfortable in that space because she was able to build relationships with teachers, administrators, and students. However, she spent most of her time in the dance studio, which was all White. Nico described her experience as the only Black girl in an all-White dance studio:

I felt like I had to act a certain way 'cause I didn't want them to kind of push their stereotypes on me 'cause I knew a lot of them, the area was like all White. So, their schools, they didn't see very many Black people[...] I used to try really hard to make sure that they knew that even though I went to an all-Black school, [her school] was still just as good as their school and stuff. I felt like I had to overcompensate a little bit.

Her experience echoes Michelle's definition about how "being a Black woman means that you have to represent your family and your ancestors, which comes with pressure. The pressure to be the best that you can be at all times, the pressure to act a certain way so that you are treated fairly." Nico continued to talk about her frustrations when other Black girls would come to the studio and act "ghetto" or "hood". Monique Harris (2018) changes the narrative of what it means for Black girls to act ghetto or hood.

For Black girls, to be "ghetto" represents a certain resilience to how poverty has shaped racial and gender oppression. To be "loud" is a demand to be heard. To have an "attitude" is to reject a doctrine of invisibility and mistreatment[...]to be a ghetto Black girl, then, is to reinvent what it means to be Black, poor, and female (Harris, et.al, p.19, 2018)

While this description challenges the ways that Black girls are viewed in society, girls like Nico are faced with feelings of frustration with her peers because of the need to belong and fit the status quo. Nico discussed how she did not really understand what being a Black woman meant to her until she went to Spelman College, but she always associated being a Black woman with working twice as hard. All ten Black women mentioned either pride, beauty, strength, power, pressure, privilege, and being misunderstood when explaining what it meant to be a Black woman. Their definitions were informed by their experiences and other Black women around them. As we explore these themes, the experience of the Black woman is at the center of each theme.

Umoja- "I Am, Because We Are"

"The questions of survival among Black girls has always been about whether they are seen, and if so, how they are seen, particularly in economically and socially isolated spaces."

(Morris et. al, p.18, 2018)

Umoja is a Swahili word meaning “unity” and refers to the African saying, “I am, because we are.” The idea that we are all here to help each other progress and ensure that no one is left behind emerged within these interviews. Many of the participants spoke on their reason for succeeding in life and attributed it to their family members who paved the way for them or how they wanted to be the ones to pave the way for others. One of the categories within this theme is sisterhood, which is described as a driving factor of encouragement for these women while in college. Armani, a first-year college student at Spelman College delved into her experience coming into college and how becoming a part of such a strong community of Black women has influenced her life.

I think me, as a Black woman, it’s just encouraging. [It’s] inspiring to be surrounded by so many Black women who want to be successful and who want to do better and want to leave a legacy for their families.

She continues to share how she was asked about whether she was intimidated by the other women [Spelman sisters] at Spelman who are doing more than she was.

No, because essentially, we’re all on the same path. Like we’re all trying to graduate, we’re all trying to do great things after we leave Spelman, but it’s just a sense of, “she’s doing this so I knew I could do it too ‘cause this is my Spelman sister.” So it’s not even like a matter of being intimidated or discouraged or jealous or envious—it’s more so like, oh if I need help, she’s going to help me or I know that she is doing this, I can do [it] too.

Armani continued to share with me the ways that her first year at Spelman has been extremely emotional because she learned so much about the diversity among Black people and how the other students got to Spelman. Armani set high goals for herself because she is the example for her little sisters and wants to be able to provide for her family. After Armani’s first international

travel experience during the summer after her junior year in Peru, her perspective of the world changed. Through the trip, she gained new sisters who she is still close with today and felt humbled by the experiences in Peru.

We went to go see one girl who doesn't even have a roof over her head. So that was very, um, it put things into perspective because you see these kinds of things like about being homeless or being less fortunate than you are on TV or you might see it where you live, but like to understand someone's circumstance on a like different level and how they still have the courage, inspiration, and motivation to keep going; that takes a lot. Our whole group was crying.

Armani continued to explain the situation of this student, who was her age in Peru and was top ten percent of her class despite the challenges that she faced. Armani shared that one of her goals is to go back and give to the student that she met in Peru or do a service project that could help her family. Even if Armani is not able to help directly, being a part of that experience shifted her perspective on what it means to help someone else.

In another situation, Giselle, a fifth-year student at Northeastern University discussed the challenges she faced attending a mostly white charter high school in Boston as the "token Black girl". She described herself as being reserved and discussed how difficult it was to build trust with people, especially when she felt like she could not relate. Her high school was extremely small, so she knew all the teachers and students, but it was not until her first time traveling internationally in the 11th grade with some of her classmates that she began to connect with the other students.

I feel some people bought into the idea of like, we're a community within [this school]. It made me see this is actually very necessary. I remember going into my senior year and

my entire senior class was like, “we’re all trying to graduate. How can we ensure that all of us are going to graduate?” We took on a lot more responsibility for one another.

Giselle continued to explain that everything that she is doing now, is not for her. Giselle is interested in evolving a community through policy changes, legislation and crises management.

To me personally, I feel like success looks like having autonomy over my life and my family having autonomy over their life and generations having autonomy over their life and Black people being liberated. So, my success isn’t going to be acquiring millions of dollars so that I can just have a million dollars. It’s going to be acquiring millions of dollars so I could afford [giving] anybody that wants to have an education [money] and the possibility of doing so.

Her desire to help others comes from the fire that she has within her to make change and create opportunities for Black families.

I feel like it’s my duty to set myself up in a way where I can try to do the things [my siblings and family] could not do, but [still worked] to provide [for me and my family] [...]

[...]the Trayvon Martin case literally changed my trajectory. I call it my awakening moment where I was just like how can we have a system that thinks this is okay because this boy was literally murdered...I’m not going to be passive about doing something that’s going to allow me to make those changes or so I felt at the time, now I’m on a different track [policy change].

What we experience in our communities affect the way that we view our purpose in life.

Michaela, a third-year student at Spelman College comes from a low-income family in

Philadelphia and shared with me how she had a point to prove to her mom, who did not want her to travel abroad her junior year. She wanted to show her mom that she was serious about this opportunity and she wanted to show her younger sisters that they can travel too.

I felt good being able to tell my little sister I just came from out the country. Like if I can do this, you can do this, you know, and hopefully everybody in my family feels like because I did that, they can do it too or a little more empowered to do it.

Michaela spent a lot of time in high school trying to fit in with her peers because she always felt different. She felt as though she did not fit in with her peers because she did not act the same way. It was not until her junior year that she felt it was okay to be different, and one of the very few Black teachers at the school helped her while she was on this journey.

I feel like I was very different from everybody else at my school. So, I always kind of [wondered], how do I navigate being different without feeling like I have to fit in. For a long time, that was a big thing with me where I felt like I just wanted to fit in and just go with the status quo. It didn't happen until my junior year where I realized like, it's okay to be different. It's okay to be all of these things and still be yourself.

Michaela went to a mostly Black high school, but majority of the staff were White. There were two Black teachers, a Black principal and school counselor. Her role model was her English teacher who would challenge her in the classroom and was big on identity and emphasizing ways that Black people showed up in the literature. Interestingly, when I asked the participants about their role models within education, they shared similar qualities. They described their role models as being encouraging, genuine, supportive, challenging, resourceful, strong, and hardworking. Additionally, these ladies found educators who either looked like them or took the

time to *see* them beyond their academic abilities. These educators made these Black girls feel *seen*.

Reclamation Of Educational Space

“As Black girls become adolescents, the influence of schools is critical to their socialization”

(Morris, et. al, p. 51, 2018).

Monique Morris (2018) does an excellent job outlining what a positive school environment looks like for Black girls. In order to cultivate a quality learning environment (Morris, p.176, 2018) for Black girls, the school must:

1. Protect the girls from violence and victimization within the school
2. Hold proactive discussions in schools about healthy intimate relationships
3. Build strong student-teacher relationships
4. Have school-based wraparound services
5. Build an increased focus on student learning coupled with a reduced emphasis on discipline and surveillance
6. Have consistent school credit recovery processes between alternative schools and traditional district or community schools

Based on the stories these Black women shared about their experiences in high school, many of them talked about not receiving a quality learning environment in either high school or college. They shared stories of how teachers did not work to build relationships with them, not knowing whether there were wraparound services available, feeling ignored, isolated, being uncomfortable, and discouraged. As I outlined in a previous theme, Bailey longed to be a part of a supportive Black community. For instance, Bailey shared her experience with their school counselor and how she made her feel discouraged during her college application process.

The school counselor was trying to persuade me not to go...well, at my school, they promote like Ivy Leagues and Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). So they didn't promote HBCUs. They never talked about HBCUs, and my school counselor kept having conversations with me to tell me to reconsider my school choice. She would suggest that I look into University of Virginia or University of Richmond, because they are really good schools, and I'm like, "I know those are very good schools, but that's not where I want to go. I want to go to Spelman." So eventually, my mom came up to school and had a meeting with them.

Bailey continued to share with me how the first time that a student at her high school went to an HBCU was the year before, and he went to Morehouse. That was the first person in their entire history. Fortunately, Bailey had a mother who was supportive of her and understood the positive effects of an HBCU experience, but if Bailey did not have that support, she would not have been able to attend an institution that has helped her learn to find her voice in the classroom. Bailey shares:

I am not the same person; I am not the same person as when I first started Spelman. I have learned and grew a lot. I've become more confident in myself and what I know.

Bailey felt imposter syndrome in high school because she never felt like she belonged, which transferred to her experience at Spelman. In the beginning, it was difficult for Bailey to find her voice, because she did not want to sound "dumb" while being surrounded by women who were very smart.

However, she continued to grow throughout her time at Spelman. In another example, Mariana, a second-year student at Georgia State University talked about her transition from a supportive academic high school environment to an unsupportive academic college environment.

Mariana was looking forward to her college experience, because she never had the opportunity to experience high school milestones like prom or spring break trips, as she did not have peers that she could relate to at school. She did not have friends who were genuine until she applied to a study abroad program, Girls Going Global, where she traveled internationally to Italy for a week. The bonds that she made on that trip was the first time that she had experienced a quality friendship. When I asked about her college experience, Mariana said:

Um, so far, it's been stressful. It's a lot more about learning the way you learn and how to teach yourself. I am learning discipline. It's a hard adjustment to me because I've had really good teachers [in high school] and my teacher now, she barely says two words to me.

Mariana is hoping to transfer next year to another school because she does not feel safe on the open campus, and she wants to have a better social experience in college. Mariana discusses her future travel plans that she is looking forward to along her college journey, which we will discuss in a later theme. Understanding the importance of education's influence on socialization, we [educators] should be cognizant of the environment that we are creating for our students and the way that it affects them long term.

Privilege of Being Black Women

We discuss privilege in terms of Whiteness (Margolin, 2015) and understanding the ways that privilege exists in our lives. For this study, the participants discuss how the ability to travel is a privilege. Furthermore, Armani shares how being Black is a privilege below:

[International travel] taught me what a privilege it is to be Black. Like a lot of people see being Black as a threat, but we are the most hardworking, nurturing, and understanding women. Being Black is beautiful.

Often, we do not see our Blackness as a privilege. Armani went into detail about how traveling abroad taught her ways that being Black is not linear. Before going to Spelman, Armani did not understand the diversity with being Black until taking African Diaspora of the World (ADW), a required class for first year students at Spelman that explores the history and culture of Black people around the world. Armani continued to discuss the way that travel is a privilege and how critical it is to take advantage of these opportunities.

I think travel period, is like, it's a privilege. It's not a given. I think to travel like that's a really great opportunity. You shouldn't take advantage of it because everybody can't do it. So, I think if you do have the opportunity, you need to go into it, like with your best foot forward...

Furthermore, Michaela shared how travel has influenced her as a Black woman saying,

Travel has shown me the privilege that I have. [Travel] makes me feel empowered to do anything that I put my mind to. Nothing is stopping me from accomplishing all these things.

Throughout her interview, Michaela voiced how empowered she felt by traveling internationally for the first time. It gave her a sense of invincibility to do anything she put her mind to. While some programs that other participants went on were funded, Michaela had to raise the money for her trip. In the beginning, it seemed daunting, but she did weekly fish fries, ran e-campaigns and was able to raise the money. The work that she put in to go on the trip made her more appreciative of the opportunity.

Similarly, Giselle reminisced on a time when she had the opportunity to travel abroad in middle school, but she declined because she was not sure why she should go on the trip. She did not understand the reason behind it, and no one helped her. Giselle always felt guarded at school

and was apprehensive about reasons teachers would ask her to take advantage of opportunities because she was the “token Black girl.” Her experiences being the “token Black girl” included faculty and staff asking her to be the spokesperson for the school when visitors came into the building. The second time she had the opportunity for her to travel internationally, she explained her feelings saying, “having access to resources to go abroad, I feel like I had to acknowledge my privilege and take advantage of it.” She realized that this was a privilege and she should take advantage of the opportunity. Since her first trip abroad her junior year, she has traveled to Brazil and Peru in college.

Acknowledging areas of privilege is not easy to do because of the many challenges that we [Black women] endure in multiple spaces, but being able to go abroad and connect with other Black people in the diaspora creates a space for us to be seen across the world among different cultures. Armani furthers this experience of privilege to her desire to help other Black girls with this opportunity stating,

I want to be able to help other Black girls understand the importance of travel because it is a privilege and we don't always get this opportunity.

The gift of being able to help others relates to the idea of unity and community that we discussed in an earlier theme and is congruent with the work of Patricia Collins (2015) outlining the ways that our experiences help other Black women and scholars.

Redefinition Of Success

In previous literature, researchers defined success based on students' abilities to finish college and/or obtain a high grade-point average (Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015). Moreover, success has been defined as gains in personal development, general education, intellectual skills, science and technology, and vocational preparation (Miller, 2017). For this current study, I wanted to

learn what success meant to these Black women. We are redefining what it means to be successful in life and education for Black women. Transitioning from success being determined by your grades or status in the world, to what these participants shared that really matters. In all ten interviews, the participants shared their definitions of success and ways that their definitions have changed over time. It was interesting to note that the changes in their definition were all very similar (see table 1).

Table 1

Black Women's' Definition of Success Overtime

Student	Definition of Success	New Definition Over Time
Michelle	Reaching the goals that I set for myself.	Currently, getting into a good graduate program. Understanding that my journey is unique and to not compare to others.
Kaylani	Doing what you want and excelling at that. Being the best. Don't just do something just to do it, do it, and be the best that you can.	Success is also being happy with who you are and what you have. Learning about real life things outside of school.
Mariana	Being happy and being stable as far as mental health and just where you want to be in life. The money will follow if the talent is there .	Success is about happiness and purpose.
Armani	Being financially stable and secure	Success = happiness
Gisselle	Success is having autonomy over my life and my family having autonomy over their life and generations having autonomy over their life and Black people being liberated.	Doing my part so that those things can happen.
Madison	Depends on the person, but it is when you feel satisfied with the results from any action. As long as you are satisfied with the result and the outcome of what happened, then it was successful	It's a lot more to life. Live your life to the fullest if you want to.
Bailey	Being happy, being able to do what I want to do on my own terms, traveling and making new experiences, being financially stable, having a family, owning a house, and creating generational wealth	There just isn't one version of success

Michaela	Being happy with the good and the bad of your life. Success is not a perfect picture and it does not look like one thing, you can't compare your journey to anybody.	You have to work hard to achieve success. <i>"Pray, but also bring your shovel"</i> success=hard work
Nico	Being happy with what you are doing. You can be successful without having a lot of money if you are content and happy with the impact that you are making	If you are genuinely happy with where you are, then you are successful
Ava	That you've done what you wanted to do and then you have no regrets and that you're fully satisfied with what you have.	My definition of success now depends on my daughter. Since I've had her, my outlook on life has completely changed.

Note: This table displays the participant's definition of success before and after their international experiences.

This table displays the way that each participant has a different view of success based on their experiences and their place in life at this moment. Over time, their definitions have become broader and more open-minded. Their international experiences helped them have a different view of the world and encouraged them to look at life differently. Their view of success had less to do with the material things, and monetary goals and everything to do with feeling completely satisfied with your life, being able to help others, and ultimate happiness. With this being the final theme, we begin to see how these women view themselves and their place in the world.

Summary

Collins (2000) shares that a "critical mass of individuals with a changed consciousness can in turn foster Black women's collective empowerment. A changed consciousness encourages people to change the conditions of their lives" (p.129). We notice throughout these themes the change that these women experienced and how it has influenced their lives. The participants of this study shared their experiences with international travel, education, Blackness, and familial challenges to help explore the ways that international travel in high school influences college experiences for Black women. After coding the interviews, I created eleven categories that

yielded six main themes from the data. These six themes identified patterns among the participants' interviews. At the end of the interviews, some of the participants left advice for current high school Black girls who are either seeking study abroad or international travel opportunities. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings, give recommendation for educators working with Black girls in high school and college, and suggest future research in this area. Additionally, I will leave statements from the participants for all the Black girls out there who may be considering international travel opportunities.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research study is needed in the field of international and study abroad research for Black girls *and* high school students, given the missing research that explores international travel for Black girls (Nahal, 2012; IIE, 2014) and the positive outcomes of international travel on their matriculation (Xu, et. al, 2013; Van hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Dietz, 2018). The research on international travel centers the effects on students educationally and personally in college (Desoff, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2009; Walker, Bukenya, & Thomas, 2011; Veral, 2017; “The World for Women”, 2019; Fox, 2019), but does not look at the way international travel can influence experiences when students travel at younger ages (NCES, 2013; IIE,2014).

Furthermore, research does not specifically state the percentage of Black women traveling abroad. The six percent of Black people who travel internationally reported by the International Institution of Education (2014) include both men and women and does not include high school students. Using the BFT framework (Collins, 2000) and phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994; Hays & Singh, 2012), this current study analyzed the high school and college experiences of ten Black women who traveled internationally in high school guided by the research question, “how do international travel experiences in high school influence college experiences for Black women?”

The findings of this study are consistent with the literature that says that study abroad has positive student outcomes in the following ways: 1) stronger academic achievement, 2) enhanced self-confidence, independence, and stronger relationships with peers, 3) greater interest in attending college and pursuit in further travel opportunities, 4) increased aspirations for future careers in international service, and 5) increased global competence (Engel, 2019). Within this

current study, we learn about the influence that international travel has had on these Black women who have shared that their experiences provided a sense of identity, a global perspective, long-lasting relationships among their peers and adults, desire to learn more about their history and culture, encouragement to inspire others, a new outlook on success, and a yearning to engage in community service around the world.

Previous research explored the challenges that Black women encounter in college, including: sense of belonging, lack of mentorship and support, lack of resources and the influence of their pre-collegiate experiences and families (Rovai, et al., 2005; Kuh et al., 2006; Wrinkle-Wagner, 201; Miller, 2017). This current study explored the college experiences of the participants of this study, who shared ways that their college experiences have been transformational, challenging and enlightening. Some of the women described the pride that they had at their institutions because of the love and support that they received from the other students, faculty and staff. This experience is congruent with previous research that says that Black women can successfully transition into college when they feel valued (Rayle and Chung, 2007).

Other participants shared the struggles that they have faced in college because of the lack of support and how they have made plans to study abroad and begin pursuing their future career interests through internships and volunteer opportunities. I interviewed women at different types of colleges and universities (e.g. HBCU, PWI, private, public) and at different stages on their college journey (first year through fifth year) to get a broad perspective of their college experiences. Collins (2000) shares the importance of feeling visible at one's university.

The women in this study who attend an HBCU discussed ways that they felt visible for the first time at their colleges, but the other women, who do not attend an HBCU discussed

challenges that they have faced and learned how to navigate. The HBCU experience that the women described centered the relationships that they built with their peers and the faculty and staff. This relationship fostered their growth and was encouraging to them. In other experiences, the participants described the ways that they had to create their own educational environment, because they did not have the same supports and relationships that the students who were at HBCU's experienced. Those at public institutions found their encouragement from outside relationships and study abroad experiences.

The goal of this research is not to assume that international travel will alleviate all challenges that students face in college but aims to provide research contributing to the literature on international travel that highlights the ways that international travel influences the college experiences for Black women, in order to provide more opportunities for Black girls.

Creating more opportunities for Black girls is important because of the positive outcomes on degree attainment (Xu et al., 2013), increased rates of graduation, leadership skills, greater awareness of self and other cultures (VanHoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Barclay Hamir, 2011; Dietz, 2018), and the lack of Black students who are traveling abroad (IIE,2014). Considering the rise in international travel over the years, there is still a huge gap between Black students traveling abroad compared to White students (Nahal, 2012). Given these statistics, Black students are not experiencing the same benefits of international travel as other races. Additionally, McCall (2011) and Harper (2013) discuss factors to college success including family, goal setting, dedication, role models, campus culture and resources.

The participants of this study shared their experiences interacting with other cultures and people their age in high school, living abroad and sharing similar experiences. Moreover, they discussed how their experiences abroad challenged them to explore and research their own

cultures and history as well as encourage others. Within their stories, I learned about ways their families became stronger, their sense of identity changed, and their view of success shifted.

Previous research measured success as students' abilities to finish college and/or obtain a high grade-point average (Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015), but the Black women of this study defined success as it related to their goals, family, mental health, finances, and happiness. Later in the interviews, the Black women shared how their outlook on success shifted slightly. Almost all the participants included genuine happiness in their definition and followed up with what that looked like for them.

Review of Themes

Educators can use this research to explore ways that we can create a transformational learning environment for Black women in high school and college. The six themes of this study centers Black woman consciousness (Collins, 2000) and how these women were able to self-define what Black womanhood meant to them. Originally, when developing these themes, I created titles that I centered the participant's stories. The first order of the themes did not truly outline the changed consciousness among the participants, so after reviewing the themes with my advisor, I realized that a change in order was necessary. The way that the themes are ordered and titled, is intentional to this study.

The first theme, "I am Not Afraid Anymore, I'm A Global Citizen And Scholar" is the beginning of the transformation from fear to becoming a critical learner and thinker. I define global citizenship as the ability to identify oneself as a citizen of the world, be aware of problems and issues of people around the world, and apply what was learned to your community (Rubab, et al., 2020), as outlined in a recent study on global citizenship and identity. As these women were sharing the challenges that they have faced in education, with identity as a Black woman,

among peers, in high school and college, among family, professor, teachers, and counselors; the participants also discussed how their international trips created a new perspective for them. Their international experiences allowed them to explore ways of learning, thinking, and asking critical questions about the way that we learn, think and create. The women in this study also shared ways that they plan to explore future careers abroad, engage in community service, and learn more about the world that what is taught in schools. This is was the first step to becoming a global citizen, overcoming fear.

The second theme, “ Definition of My Black Womanhood” embodies the theory that has undergirded this study, BFT (Collins, 2000) in which self-definition brings about social change. This social change is how Black woman have been able to progress in America overtime (Collins, 2000). Audre Lorde (1984) discusses how Black women have had a dual consciousness in America because of the need to be familiar with the oppressor for protection, but hiding your self-definition from the dominant group. I chose to focus on the term self-definition over self-determination because BFT (Collins, 1980, 2000) asserts throughout the text the power of self-definition and the determination refers to the process that Black women endure to reach their personal and group definitions of “self”.

Examples of this are evident in the interviews where the participants talk about the way that they would have to “act white” around their peers so that they did not feel and were not treated as though they were less than others. This is also known as code-switching, a tool used to navigate different spaces by choosing your style of communication based on the situation and who is involved (Alvarez Caccamo, 2002; Deggans, 2013; Wheeler & Sword, 2004; Elkins & Hanke, 2018). The ability to define Black womanhood, and create a Black women’s standpoint is essential to U.S. Black women’s survival, as described by Collins (2000). The participants

definitions of Black womanhood demonstrate the journey that BFT outlines are “the effort to find a collective, self-defined voice and express a fully articulated womanist standpoint” (Collins, 1998, 61-65). Furthermore, it is part of the journey from victimization to a free mind (Collins, 2000).

The third theme, “Umoja- I Am Because We Are” centers community. Within Black Feminist Thought, Collins shares the stories of Black women in history who shared stories of Black women going to college, receiving support from other women who were mammies and workers and would watch students go to school and encourage Black women to continue to pursue education and even her personal story of how an older Black woman told her that she was proud of her and to get her Ph.D., so that she is unstoppable (Collins, 2000). This support and encouragement is necessary for Black women to have a safe space where they can learn from each other and share experiences. In this current study, these women discussed how they felt supported at their institutions and by their friends that they made through their first international travel experiences.

The fourth theme, “Reclamation of Educational Space” is about these global citizens and scholars, who have defined what Black womanhood looks like, now reclaiming educational spaces where they felt like outsiders, challenged, isolated, and other feelings of defeat. Within this theme, I outlined what a transformative and cultivating learning environment looks like from the work of Morris (2016). Collins (2000) and Morris (2018) both assert the importance of a safe environment for Black women and girls.

The spaces where Black women and girls are learning are critical to the development of scholars and leaders in America. However, Black women are constantly rejecting assumptions and working to find personal identity (Collins, 1980, 2000). Collins outlines the “self” of Black

people that moves away from personal self in order to provide Black women with deeper, more meaningful self-definitions (Collins, 2000). Similarly, Morris (2018) discusses a culture that is not transformative and cultivating, which fosters invisibility, marginalizes pain and facilitates their criminalization that goes unchallenged. She continues to speak with Black girls in juvenile detention centers who shared similar feelings to the Black women in this current study who did not feel supported in their educational spaces. Below, I provided recommendations for educators and researchers based on Morris's work.

In the fifth theme, "Privilege of Being Black Women", we examine privilege through a different lens. The participants share the power they felt from being Black women and how they value their cultures, history, and wanted to learn more about the African diaspora. Additionally, they talked about the privilege that they had to travel internationally as Black women and the impact that it had on their future and educational goals. Examining privilege through this lens on the journey through consciousness is key to survival for Black women.

The final theme, "Redefinition of Success" outlines the way that the participants changed their views and perspective on success based on their international experiences. In the research, we measure success to GPA attainment, college completion rates, and other factors (Harper, 2013; Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015). Within this current study, the participants redefined what success meant for them, which aligns with the core value's of BFT on redefining what external members have previously defined for Black women.

Recommendations For Educators and Researchers

The stories of these ten Black women inform the recommendations that I outline for educators to contribute to the overall success of our Black women and girls. In this section, I will discuss the implications for future research, practice, and advocacy. These guidelines are in place

to help educators and researchers learn ways that we can continue the development of our Black women and girls in education. Additionally, these implications will provide a framework for why this work is important in our field and ways to implement change in your current settings.

Implications For Future Research

This current study is unique to the voices of these ten Black women, and cannot be generalized to every Black woman's experience but can be used to inform the way that educators can create spaces for Black girls to explore their global competence and provide genuine support and guidance for students. As I analyzed the data from the interviews and continued to explore the literature on international travel (Henbroff & Rusz, 1993; Angwenyi, 2014; Desoff, 2006; Jones, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2006; 2011; NCES, 2013; IIE, 2014; Sol, 2014; Smith & Mrozek, 2016; Henry, Butler & West, 2011; Miller, 2017), I thought about future research that researchers can conduct to contribute to the field. In future studies, researchers can explore the following:

1. The experiences of Black women who traveled internationally for the first time as an adult to compare, contrast and contribute to the literature on Black women and girls traveling abroad.
2. Parental perspective of those who have children who are traveling internationally: exploring the ways that parents influence their children who are traveling internationally by interviewing parents before and after their child's first abroad trip.
3. Expanding the current study to learn more in-depth about how international travel influences specific college experiences (e.g. social life and academic progress) and how these experiences look differently based on the type of school (e.g. HBCU, PWI, minority serving institution) they attended and their year of graduation.

4. The influence of international travel in elementary and middle school on college and high school.
5. How the influence of international travel varies depending on the type of travel (e.g. study abroad, family vacation, exchange program).
6. Experiences of Black women traveling within the African diaspora
7. Exploring current travel programs and groups specifically designed for Black women and girls
8. The influence that international travel has on students' overall mental health
9. The influence that international travel has on anxiety and depression for high school students
10. Quantitative study on the number of Black high school students traveling internationally, followed by the number of Black students traveling internationally among genders
11. Incorporating experiential learning models (Chakravorty & Hales, 2017) into the student curriculum to allow students to apply what they learn internationally to their world experiences.

These are merely suggestions for future studies to contribute to the literature on Black women and girls traveling internationally. While there are many schools and programs that are growing in high schools (e.g. Girls Going Global, Teens of Color Abroad, DCPS Travel Program) and colleges (e.g. Spelman, Agnes Scott, Harvard, New York University), there is still a lot of work to do in this area to increase the rate that Black students are traveling abroad (IIE,2014). Additionally, there needs to be data on the number of students traveling abroad in

high school to help inform the work that educators in both high school and college need to do to support and encourage students to take on these opportunities.

My goal for this research is to serve as a catalyst to the current literature on international travel (Henbroff & Ruzs, 1993; Angwenyi, 2014; Desoff, 2006; Jones, 2006; Penn & Tanner, 2006; 2011; NCES, 2013; IIE, 2014; Sol, 2014; Smith & Mrozek, 2016; Henry, Butler & West, 2011; Miller, 2017); to create funding opportunities for current Black travel programs; provide information for educators, families and students on how international travel influences college experiences and students' outlook on life; recruit more Black women and girls to take advantage of international travel opportunities; and start the research among mental health experts on the influence that international travel has on anxiety and depression.

Implications For Future Practice

Educators have very challenging roles, from serving as teachers, mentors, mental health providers, interim guardians, and a variety of other ways that support student needs students (ASCA, 2005; Gernstein, 2019). This current research tells us how much the relationship between students and educators influence experiences long-term. I explored what these relationships between the participants and their educators looked like and the way it fostered their growth. Some participants shared how their relationships were hostile and discouraging, while others described relationships that they would have for a lifetime.

The difference that these relationships made on their educational experience was significant to their future expectations for educators, as well as the belief that they had in themselves. As we continue to advance in the field of education, it is important to consider the voices of these ten women. Monique Morris (2018) does an excellent job centering the voices of the Black girls who have been criminalized and pushed out of schools instead of working to foster a cultivating

learning environment for students to learn and grow. Understanding the importance of education and how it is a critical tool for advancement in a society that discriminates against women and people of color, these recommendations are essential for educators and counselors for future practice. These recommendations are the following:

1. Consider incorporating international travel programs in the comprehensive school counseling program.
2. Assist with fundraising for students who cannot afford to travel abroad.
3. Apply for grants and seek funders who are willing to sponsor international travel for students.
4. Commit to conducting future research surrounding international travel.
5. Collaborate with faculty and staff to learn about international travel and ways to cultivate a transformational learning environment (Morris, 2018).
6. Serve as mentors to our Black women and girls.
7. Create a speaker series for students to learn from Black women who have traveled internationally and the way it has influenced their lives.
8. Evaluate the way you interact with students and ways that you can genuinely work with them and provide a safe space to learn and interact.

Incorporating these recommendations will be paramount to the work in this field and for our Black girls. Considering the voices in this current study, the transformative and cultivating learning environment (Morris, 2018), and the foundation of BFT (Collins, 2000), educators must

Implications for Future Advocacy

As we consider ways that we can advocate with our Black women and girls, consider the programs that are currently advertised for traveling internationally, and the students that *are*

attending the trips. Consider the students with whom you work every day, who may feel invisible or like outsiders, as many of the participants described when they shared their high school experiences. In order to advocate for our students, we must be knowledgeable, genuine, and intentional in building meaningful relationships. Additionally, we have to continue to network with funders who could help students gain these opportunities. This work is not easy and will not be complete over night, but the work that we do now will influence generations to come.

Educators have an obligation to foster student learning, which occurs in many forms. Examine your pedagogy and the way you engage with students; your advocacy will come from your work and intentionality with students.

Study Limitations

In chapter four, I briefly discussed the limitations or considerations of the study that readers should consider. In addition to the aforementioned limitations, the participants of this study self-identified as straight, cisgender women, which is not inclusive of transgender, bisexual, queer, lesbian, or gay individuals. Further research should include these participants and explore how their identity influences their experiences. If I were to conduct this study again, I would invest in a research team, because it was challenging to analyze the data as the primary researcher. I used member checking to ensure that the themes and transcripts were accurate and centered the participant's voices, but the use of a research team would have been helpful in the data analysis process.

I learned a lot from the initial interview of the participants, but I would like to interview them a second time to gain a deeper understanding their stories, and ask additional questions that developed after reading and transcribing the interviews. Additionally, I would create a longer demographic survey to include clarifying questions on family size and familial income to

understand how their income status would differ among other participants with different family sizes. Overall, future research is necessary in this area as outlined above.

Critical Reflection From the Researcher

Throughout the study, I wrote in my researcher journal about the experience that I was having, things that I noticed, things that I learned or appreciated, feelings that I shared with the Black women in this current study and my own personal travel experiences while I was collecting and analyzing data. Here I share some of my reflections. After completing my ninth interview, I wrote:

Wow! This interview went very well. It was better than I could have imagined. It really encouraged me to think more about the work that I am doing and gave me so much life and energy to this research. It also reminded me why I chose this topic and encouraged me to keep going. These voices have been so precious to me, and I am so grateful to be a part of the growing literature on international travel. I am looking forward to the work that this brings.

I realized as I progressed through the data collection, I would sometimes feel tired and defeated because I wanted to do so much more. I would reflect on my experiences, because there were times when I felt like I wanted to reach out as a mentor to these women and not their researcher. I shared similar experiences with some of the women when they discussed their educational journeys and often times, I wanted to spend time talking to them about that, but I made sure to keep their voices at the center of the interview. After I completed my final interview, I reflected on the overall process and wrote:

The interview process has been more challenging than I could have imagined. I just finished my interviews, and I am still asking myself questions about how I could have

improved the previous interview and reflecting on ways that I interacted with the participants so that I am solely focused on their experiences and not including my own experiences. I also found myself editing and updating the interview protocol along the way to cater to their stories. My goal was to get ten interviews, and there were times when it was extremely challenging to find women to fit the criteria for the interview, but surprisingly I was able to reach my goal. As I interview, I am going through transcripts, and I can already see similarities between their stories. I am excited to see this work unfold.

I was very excited to have the opportunity to do this work and did not take it lightly. While interviewing these women, I was practicing this work myself. I traveled to Ghana to celebrate the “Year of Return” and bring in the New Year with Black people from all over the world. It was the most liberating experience in all of my travel. I could fully relate to Giselle, who said that she was at peace when she was in Brazil and that it felt like home, like she belonged there. Being in Ghana was a different energy and, on my way back to the states, I wrote about it in my researcher journal:

This trip was nothing short of amazing. The Year of Return, 400 years after my ancestors were captured and treated like they were among the scum of the earth, deprived of basic human rights and stripped away of everything they ever knew; I am so blessed to be able to come back home. It was breathtaking to see the amount of Black people who traveled from all over the world, many for the very first time to enjoy being home. I met so many people who expressed their feelings of gratitude, excitements, pain, and their overwhelming mix of it all. Black people, both Africans and African Americans shared space in “The Motherland”. My feelings during the trip were similar. I was excited to go to Ghana for the first time. Though I have spent time on the

continent, in South Africa, traveling to West Africa felt surreal. I thought about the girls that I am interviewing and how they yearn to learn more about their history and culture. I was overwhelmed with the feeling that I truly didn't know where my ancestors were shipped from or even where I even come from, and I felt a deep pain. This pain I felt when I lived in South Africa. I only know a culture that we've created as Black Americans because that is all we knew, but I know there was so much more that I needed to learn about my history. While in Ghana, we visited Elmina, one of the slave castles made by the Portuguese and the Cape Coast where the ships came in and out with slaves to take starting as early as the 1400s. I learned so much about these slave castles and walked into dungeons where slaves were held and treated like animals being prepared for the markets. I saw where women were held for the satisfaction of men and then taken for beating. I wept as the tour guide, Kofi told us stories of the slaves and those who did and did not make it to the ship through the door of no return. He explained how these doors were made and why they were so small, and rooms were so dark. These people went without food and water for weeks. People died and were left among the others. Visiting the slave caste was intense. There was also an ocean tour, where you could see how slaves were shipped and routes they took, but I couldn't fathom that journey. I kept thinking about the possibility that we would never return, even today. I am definitely going to return to the continent and plan to visit other African countries. Ghana is a beautiful country, with beautiful people and I am so privileged to be able to travel here. It was not an easy journey, and definitely not cheap and there are so many Black Americans who will never step foot on the continent.

On our last day, we went to "Save Them Young" orphanage and those children were so excited just to be with each other. We danced, played, and had so much fun together. When we talked with the staff, we learned that almost all the girls will never see the outside of that

orphanage because they are in hiding from their abusers. Only a few of them were even allowed to get an education because of the lack of resources and finances. I couldn't think of any other way to start the year than to spend my time there and donate to the orphanage what we could. I had so many dreams while I was there, one that I can still visualize is me inside of what looked like a mountain, with red lights and Black girls everywhere. They were acting as pre-teen/teenage girls do and being mean to each other until I walked to the top of the mountain and asked them all to paint their faces in gold paint, not looking at each other. Once they finished, they had to pick a partner. They had a hard time finding their friends, because they all looked the same. They had to pick someone new, learn about them and find out what they had in common. In that moment, I felt alive and so much joy and then I woke up. I am not sure what that meant for me overall, but those feelings I recognized. That dream assured me that I am on the right path and that this work is important. I can't wait until Black girls everywhere begin to connect with each other and learn from one another. It is powerful to learn about the similarities that you have with other Black women and girls from around the world. We still have so much to learn.

This trip was important to reflect upon because I traveled to Ghana while collecting and analyzing data and it provided perspective for the work that I am doing. The way that I feel as an adult woman traveling to Africa is indescribable. These ten Black women have shared their experiences with me, and every woman spoke about wanting to travel again and wanting to learn more about the world. International travel is a powerful tool. Eugenie Laverne Mitchell, a Black writer born in Jamaica said, "The world is a classroom - life is the teacher and the subjects are learned every day from the successes, failures, changes, twists, turns, surprises and contradictions - some brought about through choices and others pre-ordained by destiny." Within this current study, the participants shared stories about what they learned abroad and how it

motivated them to research and learn more. They reflected on the education that they were receiving in the classroom and realized it was not enough.

Conclusion

In this current study, I have provided readers with an in-depth look on how international travel has influenced the college experiences of Black women through the voices of ten Black college women, recommendations and implications for educators, future research and advocacy and my critical reflection throughout the data collection and analysis process. This research is only the beginning of future studies and opportunities for Black women and girls in education. I am looking forward to the progression of this topic and the implications that it can have on the overall improvement of education and success for Black women and girls.

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Appendix A
Demographic Questionnaire (Qualtrics)

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this research study. Before we begin the interview, please complete the demographic questions below. Your information will be completely confidential in the study.

1. What pseudonym would you like for this study to keep your identity confidential?

2. What is your age?

3. What pronouns do you prefer?

4. What gender do you identify most with?

- a. Man
- b. Woman
- c. Gender Non-Conforming
- d. Other _____

5. Which college do you currently attend?

6. What type of college do you attend?

- a. Private
- b. Public

7. Which high school did you attend?

8. What type of high school did you attend?

- a. Urban
- b. Suburban
- c. Rural
- d. Charter

- e. Private
 - f. Homeschool
9. What year are you in school?
- a. First-Year
 - b. Second-Year
 - c. Third-Year
 - d. Fourth-Year
 - e. Fifth-Year
 - f. Sixth- Year
 - g. Other _____
 - h.
10. What is your current major?
- _____
11. What income range represents your family's financial status?
- a. Less than \$20,000
 - b. \$21,000 – \$30,000
 - c. \$31,000 to \$40,000
 - d. \$41,000 to \$50,000
 - e. \$51,000 to \$60,000
 - f. Above \$60,000
 - g.
12. What is the highest level of education of your parent(s) or guardian (s) completed?
- a. Parent/ Guardian #1
 - i. Some High School
 - ii. High School Diploma or equivalent
 - iii. Some College
 - iv. Associates Degree
 - v. Bachelor's Degree
 - vi. Master's Degree
 - vii. Doctorate Degree
 - viii. N/A
 - b. Parent/ Guardian #2
 - i. Some High School
 - ii. Diploma or equivalent
 - iii. Some College
 - iv. Associates Degree
 - v. Bachelor's Degree
 - vi. Master's Degree
 - vii. Doctorate Degree
 - viii. N/A

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study on international travel in high school and Black women's college experiences. The interview will take approximately 45-180 minutes, and it will be audio recorded.

Question	Rationale
1. What does being a Black woman mean to you? What other identities (religion, sex, gender, etc.) show up the most for you?	Learn more about what identities (being a woman, Black, student, Christian, etc.) mean the most to her and why? What shapes her experiences? BFT Dimension: Black Women Standpoint
2. Tell me about your high school experience as a Black teenager?	This research is centered around high school and international experiences, this question includes the experiences from the perspective of a Black teenager (may vary depending on the type of high school they attended – that questions is in the demographic questionnaire) BFT Dimension: Black Women Standpoint; interdependence of experiences and consciousness
3. Tell me more about your high school (e.g. demographic make-up, size, activities available, SES of the population)	This question will allow me to learn more about the participants experience in high school and how it might have shaped the opportunities that were available to her and/or other students.
4. Who is/was an educator that was your role model in high school and why?	This question will help educators learn about reasons students build relationships with students and how those relationships impact them long-term
5. What was your relationship with your school counselor like?	This question will review how school counselors have played a role in the participants decision to travel internationally and how they have been instrumental to their overall high school experiences and will inform the recommendations for educators

	BFT Dimension: Experiences & Consciousness
<p>6. When was the first time you traveled?</p> <p>a. Tell me about that experience</p> <p>b. Tell me more about any emotional or social experiences that you may have had during or prior to the international experience</p>	<p>While participants would have had to already traveled in high school to participate in the study, the type of travel, the age of travel might have impacted their experience. I might notice themes from the participants various high school international travel experiences.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Interdependence of experiences and consciousness</p>
<p>7. How many countries did you visit in high school?</p> <p>a. What were those experiences like?</p> <p>b. Were these trips organized?</p> <p>i. If so, how were they created?</p> <p>c. What was your experience like when you returned to the US?</p>	<p>The first time that they traveled may not be their first time traveling abroad. This will allow the participant to talk about other travel experiences.</p> <p>I added whether the trips were organized to learn more about how that may have changed the experiences between participants. Was the travel with family, with their school, or organized group</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Interdependence of thought and action; interdependence of experience and consciousness</p>
<p>8. Has your family traveled internationally before your first international experience?</p> <p>a. Did they share stories with you about travel? Tell me more about those stories</p>	<p>Research reveals that Black students international travel experience are influenced by their parents, family members, mentors, etc. who have had pre-travel experiences. This question allows me to learn more about the travel history in the participants family.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Interdependence of thought and action; interdependence of experience and consciousness</p>
<p>9. What influences your travel destination choice?</p>	<p>Students who are new to travel often do not have a scope of where they want to travel or why, but after travel it is interesting to learn about the reasons we travel to specific destinations.</p>
<p>10. How have your previous travel</p>	<p>This question will explore the ways that the</p>

<p>experiences shaped you as a Black woman?</p>	<p>various travel experiences have shaped the participant (if she feels that they have and if she feels that they have not, I will learn more about why).</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Black Women Standpoint</p>
<p>11. What have you gained from international travel (personally, professionally, etc.)?</p>	<p>Question 1 asks about other identities that are most salient. This question will explore those areas and what the participants feels she has gained most from travel.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Response to themes</p>
<p>12. What influenced your decision to attend _____ College?</p>	<p>There are many factors that go into choosing a college to attend. PWI's, HBCUs, Etc. will all have an impact on the participants college experiences and the reasons they choose the schools will help me understand their perspective of college, what is most important to her, and other core themes in the interview.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Experiences & Consciousness</p>
<p>13. How would you describe your college experiences?</p> <p>a. In what ways has being a Black woman influenced your college experience?</p>	<p>This can be a one-word response followed up with a story. I am looking to learn more about the theme between high school and college experiences and if there is a difference between them. Additionally, since being a Black woman is central to this research, I want to learn more about how their identities have shaped their college experiences.</p>
<p>14. What challenges as a Black woman have you faced in college?</p>	<p>This question will allow the participant to discuss their challenges</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Black Women Standpoint</p>
<p>15. Have you traveled internationally in college?</p> <p>a. If so, where? Tell me about that experience</p> <p>b. If not, do you plan on traveling?</p>	<p>Research states that pre-collegiate international travel encourages students to travel more beyond high school. This question explores that theory.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Response to Themes; Experience and consciousness</p>

<p>16. What motivates you to stay in college?</p>	<p>Research analyzes reasons Black women aren't graduating at the same rate as their White peers, this question will focus on the motivation behind the Black women that are persisting in college.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Experiences and consciousness, Black women standpoint, thoughts and action</p>
<p>17. What are your future career goals?</p>	<p>Research says that international travel has influenced future career goals. This question is to learn more about their career options and what influenced them.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Thoughts and action</p>
<p>18. What influenced your career goals?</p>	<p>Research says that international travel has influenced future career goals. This question is to learn more about their career aspirations and what influenced them.</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Thoughts and action</p>
<p>19. What does success mean to you?</p>	<p>The definition of success is discussed in this study. I want to learn Black women define success; does travel influence their perspective of success as well?</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Response to themes, self-definition</p>
<p>20. What was your definition of success before your international experience?</p>	<p>This will review themes on definition of success before traveling internationally and after</p> <p>BFT Dimension: Experiences and Consciousness, response to themes, self-definition</p>
<p>21. What motivates you to succeed?</p>	<p>I am still looking for units of meaning and interested to learn whether there are themes in what motivates them to succeed, school choice, and definition of success.</p>

	BFT Dimension: Experiences and Consciousness; response to themes
22. Please share with me your most memorable travel experience in high school.	Sometimes the experiences that we remember the most are the most significant to our lives. I want to learn this about the participant. BFT Dimension: Experiences and Consciousness; thought and action
23. What do you see as the purpose of international travel	Using the literature review, older research outlines the purpose of international travel. This question will allow me to analyze whether the purposes that have been previously outlined are consistent with the purpose that Black women with high school travel experiences share. BFT Dimension: Experiences and Consciousness; Thought and action; response to themes
24. Do you feel like international travel has changed your outlook on life? How?	In order to understand the essence of international travel for students, we have to think about the ways that international travel has influenced them, if at all.
25. What is something that you would share with Black girls in high school today?	As part of the recommendations for educators, it is important to consider the advice that the participants would share with current Black high school girls. (this can be about international travel or their experiences in general)

Appendix C

Demographic Survey Results

What pseudonym (fake name) would you like for this study to keep your identity confidential?	What is your age?	What pronouns do you use?	Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background? - Selected Choice	Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background? - Other race/ethnicity (specify) - Text	What gender do you identify most with? - Selected Choice	Which college do you currently attend?	What type of college do you attend?	What type of high school did you attend?	What year are you in school? - Selected Choice	What is your current major?	What income range represents your family's financial status?	What is the highest level of education of your first parent or guardian completed?	What is the highest level of education of your second parent or guardian completed?
Michelle	19	she/her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Hampton University	Private	Suburban	<u>Second-Year</u>	International Studies	Above \$60,000	Master's Degree	Master's Degree
Kaylani Rodgers	18	She, Her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Tuskegee University	Private	Urban	First-Year	Animal Science	\$31,000 to \$40,000	Master's Degree	N/A
Mariana Pilar	18	she , is, it	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Georgia State University	Public	Suburban	<u>Second-Year</u>	Global Studies	\$31,000 to \$40,000	Some College	Some College
Armani Johnson	18	She, Her, Hers	<u>Other race/ethnicity (specify)</u>	Honduran	Cisgender woman	Spelman College	Private	Suburban	First-Year	Economics	\$41,000 to \$50,000	Some College	High School Diploma or equivalent
Giselle	23	She, Her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Northeastern University	Private	Charter	<u>Fifth-Year</u>	Political Science	\$41,000 to \$50,000	High School Diploma or equivalent	High School Diploma or equivalent
Madison Love	24	She/her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	North Carolina A&T State University	Public	Urban	<u>Fourth-Year</u>	Civil Engineering	Above \$60,000	Master's Degree	Some College
Bailey	21	She/her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Spelman College	Private	Private	<u>Fourth-Year</u>	Sociology	Above \$60,000	Doctorate Degree	Master's Degree
Nico	21	She/Her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Spelman College	Private	Private	<u>Fourth-Year</u>	Health Science/Pre-Med	Above \$60,000	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
Michaela	21	She/Her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Spelman College	Private	Urban	<u>Third-Year</u>	Early Childhood Education	\$21,000 – \$30,000	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree
Ava	21	She/Her	Black/African American		Cisgender woman	Georgia State University	Public	Suburban	<u>Third-Year</u>	Sociology	Above \$60,000	Bachelor's Degree	High School Diploma or equivalent

Appendix D

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONSENT FORM

“We Can Travel, Too: A Qualitative Inquiry on the Influence of International Travel in High School on College Experiences for Black Women

Researcher’s Statement

I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called “informed consent.” A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Anneliese Singh
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
Email: asingh@uga.edu
Phone: (706) 542-8884 (Office)

Purpose of the Study

This study will explore how international travel experiences in high school have influenced the college experience for Black women. This research will begin to explore the ways that previous experiences have shaped Black women college experiences. There isn’t much research on Black women experiences and international travel.

The goal of this research study is to learn more about the experiences of Black women in college and how international travel has shaped them, with hopes to create more travel experiences for Black women in high school. As well as help educators, specifically school counselors understand that importance of international travel and the long-term benefits that it has for Black women around the world.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to ...

- Participate in a one audio recorded individual interview with the researcher who will ask you about your experiences of international travel in high school, college experiences and any other related experience to travel and going to college as a Black woman.

- The interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes and can be done face-to-face or via Skype or Google Hangouts. Each interview will take place in an area arranged with the researcher and participant.
- Audio and video of participants within this research study will be transcribed and then destroyed. Transcription will be the primary source for data analysis.

Risks and discomforts

- Talking about your college experience can lead to stress or bring up memories that may be uncomfortable to talk about. The researcher can provide reflective space and follow up resources for counseling and support if necessary.
- Some of the psychological risks may include: stress/discomfort, anxiety, self-blame, and anger
- Researcher will work with participants to provide pseudonyms (fake names) to ensure to avoid any breach in confidentiality and privacy.

Benefits

- Participants may find that they experience some relief, validation, strength, and further awareness of sharing their experiences in college and international travel.
- Counseling practitioners and clients will benefit from learning about the experience of Black women's college and international travel experiences, cultural intergenerational messages, and was to support students since there is a lack of literature in this area. This study will help counselors provide better services to Black women in college and girls in high school.

Incentives for participation

- Participants selected for interviews will receive a \$15 Amazon gift card for their participation in the interview.

Audio/Video Recording

- Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. Audio recordings will be archived until study completion, then destroyed. Transcription of recordings will use pseudonyms for any names mentioned.

Privacy/Confidentiality

During the course of the research study the researcher will gather some identifiable information from participants that may include your name, contact information, and email address. The researcher will be the only one who will have access to this information. Participant information will be stored in a password protected file electronically. The participants name and other names mentioned in interviews will be given a pseudonym to protect privacy. The project’s research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law. **THE RESEARCHER WILL BREAK CONFIDENTIALITY IF A REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE THAT SUSPECTED CHILD/ELDERLY ABUSE OR THE ABUSE OF SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY HAS OCCURRED.**

Taking part is voluntary

- Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- If you decide to stop or withdraw from the study, the information or data collected that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy information.

If you have questions

The main researcher conducting this study is Zyer Beaty, a graduate at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Anneliese Singh at asingh@uga.edu or at (706) 542-8884. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject’s Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher