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AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF VALUABLE
COLLEGE EXPERIENCES RELATIVE TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (134 pp.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: John D. West, Ed.D.
Donald L. Bubenzer, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study was to identify the *most helpful* to *least helpful* experiences of successful African American college sophomores that were perceived by them to be related to their academic success. Success is defined by a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00. These African American students were attending a predominantly White institution; one having an enrollment of at least 88% White students (Jackson, 2002). *Most helpful* to *least helpful* experiences were developed into a concourse of university experiences based on interviews of African American college sophomores each with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00. Statements that were obtained from these participants were used to conduct the second phase of the dissertation research.

The participants in this study were 40 African American college sophomores attending a predominantly White institution. These participants sorted items (statements) from the interviews using Q methodology. Then follow-up interviews were used when appropriate to provide some participants with an opportunity to explain their sorting of statements from most helpful to least helpful in order to clear up any vagueness.

Three factors emerged; they were named: (a) Making Use of Supportive People, (b) Making the Best Use of Time and Funds, and (c) Being Committed to Academic Success. The three factor descriptions were presented along with selected demographics of participants within those factors.

Based on the distinguishing and important statements, the rankings of their statements, and the data gleaned from interviews, participants on Factor 1 seemed to embrace perceptions of the university experiences that focused on faculty-student and peer relationships, participants on Factor 2 seemed to embrace perceptions of the university experiences that focused on financial aid and timely graduation, and participants on Factor 3 seemed to be committed to academic success.