

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS

— A GUIDE TO —

RESEARCH & PUBLISHING

PREPARED BY THE PENN CENTER FOR MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS

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ABOUT MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) emerged in response to a history of inequity at majority institutions that significantly diminished minority people's access to higher education. Now an integral part of American higher education, MSIs—specifically Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs); Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs); and Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)—have carved out a unique niche in the nation: serving the needs of low-income students of color who are underrepresented in American colleges and universities.

These institutions boast diverse faculties and staffs, provide environments that significantly enhance student learning and cultivate leadership skills, offer same-race role models, provide challenging programs of study for students, address deficiencies resulting from poor preparation in primary and secondary school, and prepare students to succeed in the workforce and in graduate and professional education. Because MSIs enroll a substantial share of minority students, many of whom might not otherwise attend college, the continuous development and success of these institutions are critical for realizing our nation's higher education and workforce goals as well as for the greater benefit of American society.

MSIs play two vital roles for the nation's economy. First, they elevate the workforce prospects of disadvantaged populations. And second, they increase the number of minorities and disadvantaged people in graduate and professional schools and the careers that require post-baccalaureate education and training, thereby addressing the longstanding underrepresentation of these populations.

OVERVIEW

This research guide aims to help scholars and scholar-practitioners in approaching MSI research. The guide will cover crafting a research question, constructing a literature review, possible research methods, the publishing process, funding options, and mentorship. Though this guide will not walk you through every step of how your individual research project will need to be executed, it hopes to lay a foundation for aspiring researchers interested in contributing to the existing knowledge of MSIs.

Table of Contents

- 4 Unanswered MSI Research Questions and Relevance**
What are some of the unanswered research questions related to MSIs? 4
How do I craft a research question? 6
The research question balancing act 6
The Concept Map 7
How do I determine if my research is relevant? 8

- 9 Literature Review Construction and Research Methods**
How do I organize a literature review? 9
Think twice about citing research that is not peer-reviewed 9
Which research method(s) do I use? 10
What are some research methods resources? 13

- 14 Publishing and Presenting**
Where can I publish my work? 14
How do I choose the type of publication I wish to pursue? 14
Where can I present my work? 15

- 16 Funding and Mentors**
Who funds work on MSIs and/or people of color? 16
How do I find a mentor to guide me? What should I look for? 16

Unanswered MSI Research Questions and Relevance

WHAT ARE SOME UNANSWERED RESEARCH QUESTIONS RELATED TO MSIs?¹

MSIs are an understudied institutional type. The dearth of data has not only resulted in general misunderstandings about them, but also means that there are many rich veins of research waiting to be explored. For example, answering new or rarely explored questions will inform you of the factors that contribute to student choice. You may also discover outcomes directly related to specific inputs or decide if it is a phenomenon that occurs because of the intrinsic values of this student group. Partnering with MSIs for research opportunities also allows the institutions to explore topics and issues that affect their campuses.

Though it is not necessary, it can be helpful to choose a particular perspective from which to approach your research. Prior to conducting research, you should ask: why are you fascinated with a particular topic or issue? For example, are you interested in the student affairs perspective? Are you interested in examining an issue from a leadership vantage point? Maybe finances, funding or student experience are the areas that really interest you? It is entirely possible that these areas intersect. However, selecting a compelling topic will not only aid in the formulation of your research questions, but also assist you in focusing on your target audiences and future publications.

Here are some of the unanswered research questions pertaining to MSIs:

- **What makes MSI programs effective and successful?**

MSI research is often approached from a deficit model, focusing on specific cases of intolerant campus climate, mismanagement of money, or low graduation rates. Although there is a growing body of research using an asset-based approach, more research is needed. Programs, initiatives, administrative practices, curricula, and students that are effective and successful are avenues in need of further exploration. We also need a better understanding of how researchers and policy makers evaluate the efficacy of the student body—in other words, how “effective practices” and “successful students” are defined.
- **What are the unique leadership and governance issues at MSIs? How do these issues influence student success?**

Leadership and governance literature is sometimes colorblind, often disregarding the importance of institutional type and context. MSIs have unique contexts due to the financial strains they endure and the students they serve. MSIs educate an overwhelming majority of low-income, first-generation, under-resourced students. Yet they receive limited state and federal funding and tend to have relatively small endowments. This creates unique concerns and challenges for leadership and administration.

In addition, institutions such as TCUs, HSI, AANAPISIs and HBCUs have culturally centered missions. These specific missions not only racialize the institutions but also play a significant role in the institutions’ decision-making and strategic planning. These contexts must be taken into account when attempting to understand MSI leadership and governance. Furthermore, it is important to study MSI leadership so that aspiring leaders are aware of the skills necessary to successfully lead and sustain these institutions.
- **How will the next generation of MSI leadership be identified?**

MSIs have struggled to fill vacancies in leadership positions. To effectively serve students, MSIs must be led by competent and effective leaders. Part of that competency includes a sensitivity to and heightened understanding of the MSI context and the particular needs of their student bodies. Researchers have yet to fully address how this new group of leaders will be identified. Once these leaders are identified, more must be known about how this group is mentored and prepared to lead.

¹Source: Gasman, M., Lundy-Wagner, V., Ransom, T., & Bowman, N. (2010). *Unearthing promise and potential: Our nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- **What are the practices of high-achieving students at MSIs?**

When discussions of MSI students take place in the higher education literature, the focus is often on low graduation rates or students' developmental needs. Though these topics may be relevant to some—just as they are at a number of non-MSI institutions—MSI campuses are full of students who are high achieving and high performing. One need only look at the large number of students of color who advance to professional and graduate schools to find evidence that MSIs produce talented and prepared students. These success stories, however, often go untold.

Research is needed to understand more about high-achieving MSI students and the campus practices and contexts that have created environments for them to flourish. Knowing more about the ingredients needed to create successful MSI students can inform and teach the spectrum of higher education institutions how to better serve this demographic. Such knowledge is particularly important given the well-documented challenges that many high-achieving students of color encounter at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math.

- **What are the practices and roles of honors programs on MSI campuses?**

An extension of the lack of research on high-achieving MSI students is the lack of research on MSI honors programs. In various ways researchers have incorrectly asserted that honors programs could not possibly exist on MSI campuses. Not only are there notable honors programs on MSI campuses, but they play an important role in everything from recruitment to retention. Research on the various types, aims, and goals of MSI honors programs would help elucidate the reasons why honor students choose to attend MSIs; the role MSI honors programs play in recruitment, enrollment, and persistence; and the ways in which MSI honors programs are different from those at other institutional types.

- **What are the opportunities for collaboration among MSIs?**

Many higher education funders are looking for projects and programming that encourage collaboration. MSIs often serve similar groups of students, and there are opportunities to collaborate. Research to identify spaces of collaboration would benefit and aid institutions. Furthermore, knowing more about the process of collaboration, as well as the benefits and the challenges, would aid MSIs in finding new opportunities to foster student success, stretch strained resources, and access funding.

- **What are innovative ways that MSIs approach funding?**

MSIs often find themselves strapped for resources. In the current climate of accountability, where state and federal funding is increasingly tied to performance-based measures, these institutions must fight for funding. As state and federal governments reduce funding to postsecondary institutions, MSIs must seek out new and innovative strategies to fund their institutions. Research that identifies potential funding opportunities and successful fund-raising efforts would aid in this endeavor.

- **What outcomes are unique for students attending MSIs?**

Major concerns of both funders and policy makers center on what MSIs are producing—in other words, their outcomes. Because MSIs primarily serve particular racial and socioeconomic groups of students, generalized and noncontextualized outcome measurements, such as 5-year graduation rates, are not the best indicators to measure the work that MSIs do.

Research is needed to help understand and construct outcomes that are more appropriate for the MSI context, such as completion rates of Pell Grant recipients and the number of graduates who enroll in professional and graduate schools.



HOW DO I CRAFT A RESEARCH QUESTION?²

Crafting a research question can be challenging. The following steps can make the process more approachable:

1. Ask yourself, “What do I want to know?”

This can be a general inquiry, just to get you started in a certain direction. Any of the questions listed in the previous section are good examples. Others might include:

- How do students choose to attend MSIs?
- What role does leadership play in the daily life of MSIs?
- How does student participation in campus organizations affect campus climate?

2. Narrow your focus.

After you’ve chosen a general question, it’s time to narrow the focus so that you can feasibly craft a study around it. One way to do this is to consider what aspects of the broader question interest you. Another approach to consider is whether you’re interested in MSIs more broadly or whether you want to focus on a specific type of MSI, such as an HBCU or an AANAPISI. Applying this second method to the sample questions in Step 1 will help generate the more focused versions of this question. Following are just two examples:

- What are the motivations behind students choosing to attend AANAPISIs?
- What are the aspirations and educational life histories of HBCU students?

These questions, while more specific, are still fairly broad. Take some time to really refine them, for example:

- What are the factors that influence high-achieving students of color to choose to apply to or enroll in HBCUs as opposed to other types of institutions?

Before you proceed, you should be clear about what you want to know—in other words, that you are asking the right question. For instance, “how” students choose a college to attend is about process; therefore, your inquiry will be looking into *the college choice process*. If what really piques your curiosity is “why” students choose the college they eventually attend, your research will have more to do with *the reasoning, motivations, and thoughts of students*.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION BALANCING ACT

Striking the right balance between a research question that is specific enough to guide a feasible study and one that doesn’t box you in too narrowly can take time. Though you are looking for an answer to a particular question, you want to leave room for your data to “speak”—to reveal other aspects that you had not previously considered.

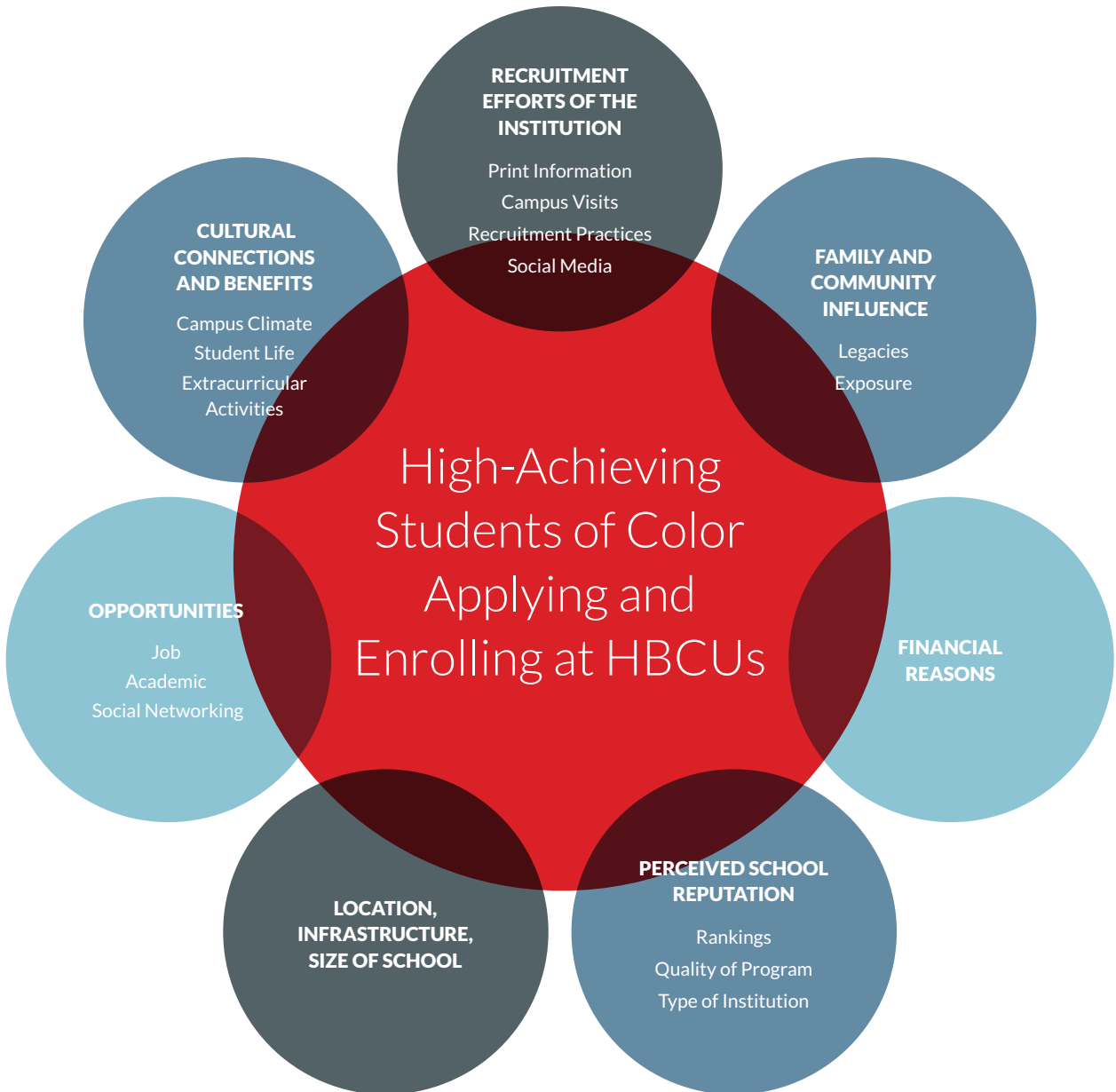
It is important to make sure that your research question accurately reflects the line of inquiry that interests you. The research question will not only inform what methodological approach you employ, but also what participants (if applicable) should be a part of your study.

Creating a concept map can aid in the construction of your research question and help clarify the role and purpose of theory. A concept map provides a visual of the theory that you are attempting to construct or understand. The concept map helps you understand “what is going on” with the subject or idea you are attempting to study. The concept map is able to do this by visually pulling together your research and helping you see the implications, limitations, and relevance of your study. The concept map can also help you see unexpected connections and contradictions so you can figure out the implications in which to address these issues. Your concept map should consist of two major elements: the ideas and the relationships between those ideas. Overall, it is not necessary to create a concept map to design your research. However, concept mapping can be a useful tool in developing your conceptual framework.

²Sources: Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

CONCEPT MAP

In the concept map below, for example, we might ask: What are the factors that influence high-achieving students of color to apply to or enroll in HBCUs as opposed to other types of institutions? The central circle in our map contains the main participants (high-achieving students of color) of our study. In the outer circles, outside factors that may contribute to and influence their decision-making process can be found (such as “Recruitment Efforts at the Institution”). This visual representation helps serve as a conceptual guide to understanding the various relationships between our central participants and outside factors.



3. Determine what is already known about the topic.

After you have developed one or more research questions, your next step is to find out what is already known about your topic. This step, which is a preview for your full literature review, allows you to see what the existing literature says about your question and if it has already been saturated in research. Because the body of research on MSIs is often very small, many topics are scarcely researched or grossly outdated. In the latter case, it is important to approach your topic from a contemporary perspective. An example of this would be looking at student success in definitions other than graduation rates. After you find out what is known, you will undoubtedly discover “missing links” that may help you see where your line of inquiry fits within the larger body of existing MSI research. Returning to our sample questions from Step 2, How do students choose to attend MSIs?, ask yourself:

Is there an existing body of research? If so, what are the findings?

Maybe you discover that a growing number of Latino students are choosing to attend HBCUs. You also might discover that this demographic is growing in particular areas, and that schools are receiving funding for increasing their Latino student population. Based on these findings, you can refine your question so that it more closely resonates with the landscape of the existing research:

How do Latino students choose to attend an HBCU?

Pursuing a question such as “How do Latino students choose to attend an HBCU?” may speak to a gap in the research literature. This question serves two purposes. First, it addresses a subset of your original question. Second, it offers implications for policy and practice.

HOW DO I DETERMINE IF MY RESEARCH TOPIC IS RELEVANT?

Determining if your research is relevant can be tricky. Unfortunately, people often question the importance of MSI research, so it’s essential that you first determine why you think the research has value and what you see as its true purpose. Of course, it is also important to do research that will have an influence on the institutions you are studying. To determine whether your research is a worthwhile endeavor, ask yourself the following series of questions: How will my research be of service to MSIs? Will it meaningfully contribute to the higher education community’s knowledge of these institutions? Will it shed light on practices that lead to student success? Will it aid MSIs in becoming more effective? In essence, who is your audience? What do you want them to know? The more applicable your research, the more valuable it will be.

Next, check with outside sources to ascertain the level of significance attached to your question. Partnering and having discussions with MSIs and MSI leadership will allow you direct access to those who will be affected by your research. Involving MSIs in the development of your research will only aid in understanding the true significance of your work. Another way to figure out the necessity or importance of your research question is to see what the experts have to say. What are MSI experts talking about? Seek out the top scholars on MSI research. Who has the most publications and, more importantly, whose work is cited heavily? Reading and being familiar with these scholars’ work is one way of determining what areas of research are needed in the MSI sector. Discussion sections of existing research can also point to areas that need to be further explored. Literature reviews may serve as sources of inspiration for research questions as well.

Another approach is to contact scholars, asking them about the questions you are interested in pursuing. Getting a first-hand opinion of your research interests from MSI scholars can help you determine a research direction that will have a significant impact.

Finally, stay afloat of MSI current affairs. Setting up Google alerts, following blogs and websites, and subscribing to higher education periodicals and journals are all ways to know what topics are currently impacting the MSI community. These mediums may also be excellent starting points for crafting research questions.



Literature Review Construction and Research Methods

HOW DO I ORGANIZE A LITERATURE REVIEW?³

Approaching the literature review can feel like a daunting task. Having a strategy will help. After you have chosen your research question, determine the natural subsections of the question. For example:

RESEARCH QUESTION: What opportunities are there for collaboration among MSIs?

- SUBSECTIONS:**
- (a) Research on collaboration between specific types of MSIs
 - (b) Research on cross-institutional collaboration
 - (c) Research on the collaborative process
 - (d) Research on why collaboration is important/encouraged

In gathering your literature, use multiple search resources:

- Scholarly search engines such as:
 - o **Google Scholar**—scholar.google.com
 - o **EBSCOhost**—www.ebscohost.com
 - o **Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)**—eric.ed.gov
- The ProQuest database to search for dissertations and master’s theses related to your topic.
- The literature reviews and reference lists of scholarly articles, dissertations, and master’s theses related to your topic.
- Your university’s library research specialist can assist you in finding literature, as well as offer guidance on effective search techniques.

Don’t let technology lull you into laziness. Though it may be tempting to rely solely on electronic journal articles for your literature review, be sure to look beyond digital media when conducting research. Hard copy books and reports can provide valuable information that is pertinent to your research question.

THINK TWICE ABOUT CITING RESEARCH THAT IS NOT PEER-REVIEWED

Avoid using magazine articles, news stories, and opinion pieces as cornerstones of your literature review. It is common in MSI research that these mediums offer good perspectives, and you may decide to include them if they speak to your topic in a major way that peer-reviewed material does not. However, if you are writing a scholarly paper, you should focus primarily on peer-reviewed scholarly articles and books.

Searching for literature can be both rewarding, frustrating and, at times, overwhelming. Realistically, you will never gather all of the available literature on a topic. Search the literature until you have reached a point of saturation, then stop. After all, you still need to read, analyze, and write a review. You do want to ensure, though, that you have taken into account seminal pieces of work and possibly key pieces that have not previously been brought into discussion and analyzed. If you start seeing the same titles over and over again, this is a good sign it is time to stop searching and start reading.

Creating a timeline is essential. It will make the task less daunting and help you get through the literature efficiently. Create a realistic timeline based on your working speed. And remember that you not only have to read, but you also have to analyze.

As you read through the material, highlight key points and begin to paraphrase your notes and findings. Take your time and make sure you are not simply restating the literature. A literature review is not a book report. It is a critical analysis and synthesis (i.e. your take). This will help you understand and explain how your research contributes to the literature.

³Source: Galvan, J. L. (2009). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (4th Ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

WHICH RESEARCH METHOD(S) DO I USE?⁴

There are three broad categories of methodological approaches—quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. All have their desirable and less desirable characteristics. In general, the method you will use will be informed by your research question. Remember, you want to employ the method that best serves to answer your question.

Ask yourself, “What kind of answers am I looking for?”

Do you want descriptive answers? Answers that tell a story or provide nuanced insight into a lived experience? If so, qualitative methods may serve you best. Or are you looking for broad numerical trends and planning to measure effects? In this case, quantitative methods may be more appropriate. Perhaps, if you are looking to combine the empirical insights of face-to-face interviews with statistical analysis, mixed methods may be your best option. If you are unsure of what particular method to employ, do not be hesitant to refer to the methodology section of similar studies for inspiration and insight.

Below is an example of how different qualitative approaches can affect your engagement with a research question and what your outcomes might be.

Differing Qualitative Approaches

Qualitative methods are employed across a variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, to engage empirical questions for the purpose of exploring a particular subject, issue, or phenomenon. Specifically, qualitative methods are best suited to help answer questions of how and why. For example, how do African American youth navigate issues related to race, class, and gender in education? Keep in mind, if the particular research question you are asking is centered on understanding a social phenomenon (that is, how subjects experience or make sense of an event or scenario), then qualitative methods may be your best option.

The primary methodological techniques associated with qualitative research are face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and participant observations. Face-to-face interviews enable the researcher to ask concrete open-ended questions to study participants about their experiences. For example, “Can you tell me more about how it felt when you realized that you would be attending college?” The importance of face-to-face interviews is that they allow the participant the opportunity to explain a particular event in his or her own words. Face-to-face interviews are the foundation upon which your qualitative analysis is built.

Focus groups are intended to bring together a small group of participants for the purpose of elaborating upon general themes and topics that emerged from individual interviews. The base rationale of a focus group is to offer participants the opportunity to clarify or elaborate, amongst themselves and on their own terms, the meaning or significance of an event, saying, or practice. Focus groups are an ideal time to ask for clarification of a general theme or topic that emerged from interviews. For example, “I noticed that everyone talked a lot about the importance of gender in the classroom. How important is gender? Is there a time when gender seems to be more important? Is there a time when gender does not seem to matter?” Remember, what is important to you as a researcher may not be significant to participants. Focus groups are the perfect opportunity to interrogate the difference.

Participant observations occur when the researcher accompanies participants in their daily lives and notates their activities across differing settings. The rationale underpinning participant observations is fairly straightforward: to compare and contrast the words and interactions of participants in differing locations. Ask yourself, “Who does Student A interact with? Is there variation in how Student A interacts with others at home, school, or in the community? What are those differences? What might account for them?” Participant observations are a fairly straightforward technique that enables researchers to directly enter the lives of participants.

If we take the insights of qualitative methods and apply their techniques, what might that look like in practice?

On the next page, we highlight various approaches to qualitative research and draw attention to their focus of study, types of data collection and analysis, and final written product. In order to elucidate the difference between the varying qualitative approaches, we take this sample question—“What experiences lead high-achieving students of color to enroll at HBCUs?”—and show what it might look like in terms of a potential research project. Remember, the question you ask will ultimately inform how you decide to report your findings.

⁴Sources: Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

A. NARRATIVE

- Focus of Study
 - o To explore the lived experiences of high-achieving students of color who enrolled at an HBCU
- Types of Data Collection and Analysis
 - o Interviews
 - o Focus Groups
 - o Participant Observations
 - o Field and Reflection Notes
- Final Written Product
 - o Develop a narrative story about this particular individual's life

B. PHENOMENOLOGY

- Focus of Study
 - o To explore the structures of experience and consciousness of being a high-achieving student of color who chooses to enroll at an HBCU
- Types of Data Collection and Analysis
 - o Interviews
 - o Focus Groups
 - o Participant Observations
 - o Field and Reflection Notes
 - o Document Analysis
- Final Written Product
 - o A philosophically informed exploration of the structures of experience and consciousness that underlie why students decide to attend an HBCU

C. GROUNDED THEORY

- Focus of Study
 - o Instead of beginning a research project with a hypothesis, grounded theory allows the researcher to develop a theory (on, for example, the influential factors of college choice among high-achieving students of color) through a combination of data collection and analysis
- Types of Data Collection and Analysis
 - o Interviews
 - o Focus Groups
 - o Participant Observations
 - o Member Checking
- Final Written Report
 - o The final written report will put forward a theory that is built upon data collection, the development of codes, the grouping of codes into concepts, and the transformation of concepts into categories. This process will serve as the foundation to your theory

D. ETHNOGRAPHY

- Focus of Study
 - o To explore how high-achieving students of color choose to attend HBCUs. This will include an analysis of their day-to-day lives, cultural practices, life histories, and educational trajectories. The aim is to gain insight into how their cultural norms, values, and belief structures inform their motivations and aspirations for attending an HBCU
- Types of Data Collection and Analysis
 - o Interviews
 - o Focus Groups
 - o Participant Observations
 - o Field and Reflection Notes
 - o Member Checking
- Final Written Report
 - o A book-length manuscript that empirically details and theoretically explains how high-achieving students of color decide to attend an HBCU. This should include numerous empirical examples to support your overall claim

E. CASE STUDY

- Focus of Study
 - o To develop an in-depth and nuanced ethnographic analysis of how and why high-achieving students of color choose to enroll at HBCUs
- Types of Data Collection and Analysis
 - o Interviews
 - o Focus Groups
 - o Participant Observations
 - o Document Analysis
- Final Written Report
 - o In article format, a case study highlights empirical examples of various themes that emerge among high-achieving students who enrolled at HBCUs

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative methods refer to the empirical inquiry of social phenomenon through statistical, mathematical, or computational analysis. Since quantitative studies tend to have much larger sample sizes than qualitative research, quantitative analyses are often utilized to identify broad trends and patterns that encourage generalization and comparison across wide swaths of groups, populations, or institutions. Specifically, quantitative research is often employed to address the manifold relationships within and across variables embedded within a particular social phenomenon. For example, a quantitative research question might be: “To what extent can social class differences explain why high-achieving students of color decide to attend an HBCU?” The emphasis of the sample question is to quantitatively examine the influence of social class differences on student decision-making. Quantitative research designs can also be descriptive so as to help determine correlation between variables, i.e., speak to the relative strength or weakness of class difference in the student’s decision-making process. Quantitative designs can also be experimental by demonstrating causality between variables, i.e., speak to the degree to which a variable causes or has an effect on another variable.

Characteristics of quantitative research include the following:

- Data are usually gathered from structured research instruments, such as surveys.
- Results are based on large sample sizes which are considered representative of the population.
- The study can be replicated due to high reliability.
- Data is typically presented in the form of numbers and statistics.

There are several statistical packages that are used for quantitative research (such as SPSS). For more information pertaining to the nuts and bolts of statistical software, please refer to the bibliography for useful reference guides.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods research coalesces the insights of qualitative and quantitative analyses to provide researchers with a more holistic perspective of the phenomenon in question. Approaching research this way may provide a more far-ranging explanation than a single methodological approach. Keep in mind, however, the nature of your research question will play a significant role in determining whether or not mixed methods is appropriate, which will ultimately affect how the study is designed. One question to keep in mind that may help determine the suitability of mixed methods is: What kind of data will you need to support the research you wish to undertake?

Characteristics of mixed methods research include:

- The design of the study is rooted in some combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Research problems can transform into research questions and/or hypotheses based on prior literature, knowledge, experience, or the research process itself.
- Sample sizes vary on the particular methodology employed.
- Data collection can involve any qualitative or quantitative technique available to researchers.
- Interpretation is continual and can influence stages of the research process.

WHAT ARE SOME RESEARCH METHODS RESOURCES?

Below are some resources to aid in the process of selecting a methodology:

- Baxter, P. & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.
- Carspecken, P. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tuckman, B. W., & Harper, B. E. (2012). *Conducting educational research* (6th Ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Yin, R. K. (2010). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Publishing and Presenting

WHERE CAN I PUBLISH MY WORK?

You can publish your work in print and online platforms. This might include peer-reviewed journals, books, reports, newspapers, and magazines.

THE JOURNAL SUBMISSION PROCESS⁵

- Determine where to submit your work.
 - Browse journal websites and thoroughly read through Calls for Papers
 - Ask mentors, faculty, and/or experts in the field for journal suggestions
 - Scan your references section for the journal you cite the most
 - Search for journals with special issues related to your topic
- If the journal is unfamiliar to you, try browsing articles to determine whether your work matches the overall tone and style of the publication—make changes as necessary.
- After you've decided on a journal, follow its submission guidelines. This information can be found on its website.
- If the journal relies on anonymous peer review, make sure to remove any personal identifiable information (such as your name) prior to formal submission, including in-text citations and references.
- Include a cover letter to the editor with your submission. Make sure to state that your paper is not being reviewed by other publications, and list any prior references that you removed to maintain anonymity.
- The review period varies per publication, but if you have not heard back from the editor within approximately three months, send a brief and polite email to the editor inquiring about the status of your submission.

Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success by Wendy Belcher is a great resource to help in preparing your work for publication.

BOOK REVIEWS

- You can also publish a book review, which is a short form article (approximately two pages) that describes and assesses the quality of a book. Book reviews are typically published in a scholarly journal.
- Book reviews afford scholars the opportunity to provide a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the work authored by their peers.

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE TYPE OF PUBLICATION I WISH TO PURSUE?⁶

BOOKS

- Broad and in-depth investigation of an original topic
- More profound analysis and conclusions
- May include original research from numerous studies, which may have taken place over several years
- Longer (90,000+ words)

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

- In-depth investigation of an original topic
- Provides analyses and overviews of research
- Includes original research typically from one experiment on a specific subject
- Medium (9,000 words)

⁵Source: Adapted from "Journal Submissions" by Eszter Hargittai and "From Review to Publication" by Eszter Hargittai.

⁶Source: Adapted from "Books, journals, newspapers, magazines" by University of Victoria Libraries. "Printable Summary" by Rutgers University Libraries.

NEWSPAPERS

- Not in-depth—sufficient for information on current events
- Provides an overview analysis of issues or trends
- Not original research
- Shorter (500-750 words)

MAGAZINES

- Little in-depth information—provides brief information on various broad topics
- Sufficient for entertainment and/or a general audience
- Not original research—little to no jargon

WHERE CAN I PRESENT MY WORK?

You can present your work at conferences, conventions, symposia, colloquia, and meetings, and contribute to the reports of various higher education organizations.

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

- Browse conference and professional organization's websites and thoroughly read their Call for Proposals or Call for Papers sections.
- Determine whether you want to participate in a paper session, poster session, roundtable session, and/or panel discussion.
- Follow the submission guidelines listed, and submit prior to the deadline.
- Your proposal may be accepted, accepted with recommendations, rejected with recommendations for a future conference, or rejected altogether.



Funding and Mentors

WHO FUNDS WORK ON MSIS AND/OR PEOPLE OF COLOR?

Funding for larger research projects and studies is an important part of the research process. If you are interested in funding opportunities to get your study funded, there are numerous organizations that provide monies for studying MSIs and people of color.

TIPS FOR SECURING RESEARCH FUNDING

- Be explicit about:
 - stating your research question;
 - asserting why your research question is important;
 - describing how you will go about answering your research question;
 - telling how you will communicate and distribute the findings.

SOME FUNDERS INCLUDE:

- [American Educational Research Association](#)
- [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#)
- [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#)
- [Corporation for National and Community Service](#)
- [Educational Testing Service](#)
- [Ford Foundation](#)
- [The Kresge Foundation](#)
- [The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust](#)
- [Institute of Education Sciences](#)
- [Lumina Foundation](#)
- [NASA Office of Education](#)
- [National Science Foundation](#)
- [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#)
- [The Spencer Foundation](#)
- [USA Funds](#)
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#)

HOW DO I FIND A MENTOR TO GUIDE ME? WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

Positive and effective mentoring experiences are dependent upon the mentor and mentee sharing common research goals, insights, and worldviews.

SOME GUIDELINES TO AID IN FINDING A MENTOR INCLUDE:

- Determine the area(s) in which you seek mentoring
 - Advice on career, researching, publishing, presenting, work-life balance
- Find the individual(s) who can fulfill your needs for professional development
 - Higher education scholars, faculty, administrators, practitioners, policymakers, funders

- Determine whether the potential mentor has been a satisfying mentor to others.
 - o If feasible, contact prior mentees and inquire about their experiences, then determine if it aligns with what you are seeking.
- Assess whether the potential mentor is an advocate for his or her mentees.
 - o Determine whether they provide assistance, promote their mentee's strengths, and protect their mentee's resources.
- Evaluate whether the potential mentor will help develop valuable skills.
 - o Researching, writing, teaching, administration, and overall professional development
- Determine whether the potential mentor will discuss how to best navigate the system in place.
 - o Assess if they convey and exhibit the standards of the profession.

CONTACTING YOUR POTENTIAL MENTOR:

- Send an introductory email
 - o Discuss in this message how your research interests are analogous in nature and then offer to meet this individual in person
 - i. If the individual lives in another town, offer to make a personal visit and/or speak to the person on the phone.
 - ii. Discuss works that you have read that were authored by the potential mentor. State how your research relates to what the potential mentor has authored.
 - iii. Indicate to the potential mentor how your research will fill in the existing research gaps within your field. This individual will want to know that your research is unique and qualifies as original research that is truly compelling.
- Find out if your mentor is retired, retiring soon, or at the present moment if she/he is on sabbatical. If on sabbatical, where exactly is this person situated?
- Sit down with the mentor and have a preliminary chat.
- In both your email and personal meeting, ask thoughtful and insightful questions

ONCE YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED AND SECURED AN APPROPRIATE MENTOR:

- Start building a relationship with that/those person(s).
- Use your time with your mentor effectively by having questions prepared and goals set in place for every meeting.
- Welcome feedback and constructive criticism.
- Think critically and reflect on the information delivered by your mentor.
- Understand the limits of the mentoring relationship.
- Thank your mentor for her/his time.
- Update your mentor on your overall progress .
 - o Internships found, research opportunities explored and participated in, professional positions secured, publications, and presentations

The Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions hopes that you have found this guide to be useful, and we wish you success on your research journey.

We look forward to providing continuing support for scholars interested in MSIs.



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