THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Joan E. Cephas

Abstract

According to measurements of academic achievement, many African-American students experience academic challenges and are perceived as lacking necessary skills for academic success. Researchers have theorized that religious/spiritual attributes and family environment influence academic achievement among African-American students. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between religious commitment, as measured by the total score on the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), and 2010-2011 first-quarter grade point average (GPA) scores. Relationships were also examined between religious activities and family environment and academic achievement. Survey research was used to gather religious commitment, religious activities, and family environment data. A student information database was used to obtain academic achievement data. Self-selected 11th and 12th graders in a mid-Atlantic suburban public high school formed the convenience sample ($N = 38$). Pearson $r$, Kendall’s tau_b, Spearman’s rho, and linear multiple regression model empirically validated the relationship between academic achievement and religious commitment. Likewise, religious activities and family environment correlated with academic achievement. The results of this study offer policymakers, educators, Black churches, parents, and students insight on the positive influences of religious commitment, religious activities, and family environment on academic achievement, specifically among African-American 11th- and 12th-grade public high school students.