INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE: BLACK MALES IN STEM

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In the scientific literature, special attention has been devoted to Black males in education (Hines et al., 2020; Jackson and Moore, 2006; Moore et al., 2021), and increasingly this literature base has concentrated on their low participation rates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and the many factors that influence their beliefs, experiences, and success in STEM (Fletcher et al., 2021, 2022; Moore, 2006; Moore et al., 2003). Black males are significantly underrepresented in STEM, evident by their low representation in advanced K-12 mathematics and science courses, programs, and curricular that prepare them for STEM career pathways (Fletcher et al., 2022; Henderson et al., in press; Hines et al., 2021). Despite long-standing efforts to diversify STEM, Black males only comprise 6% of college graduates with STEM degrees, which is lower than White males (56%), Latino males (12%), and males of Asian/Pacific Islander descent (13%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023; National Science Foundation, 2022). The participation rates of Black males in STEM are likely to remain low until the roadblocks constraining their STEM interests, preparation, and experiences are substantially addressed. Black males need continuous access to high-quality STEM teaching, learning, curriculum, and formal and informal experiences that prepare them for high-wage, high-demand, and high-skilled STEM certificates, academic majors, and careers (Hernandez-Gantes and Fletcher, 2014). Therefore, providing multiple pathways and access to rigorous STEM courses and programs for Black males should be an American priority. Collectively, this two-part special issue offers a significant contribution to the STEM scientific and theoretical literature. It focuses on a demographic group that is increasingly covered in the STEM literature. Thus, very few scientific STEM journals, if any, have devoted two issues to Black males. As theme issue editors, we believe that each manuscript offers its own individual contribution to the theoretical and scientific literature; however, the manuscripts, collectively, offer a more complete depiction of the grand challenges facing Black males in STEM and greater understanding of the systems and factors that influence their participation—or lack of participation—in STEM. To note, the second part of this special issue will be published at a later time.
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REFERENCES


