

Subjectivity Statement

In my role as an Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator in the Computer Science Technology program at Savannah State University, I have had the direct experience witnessing the underrepresentation of Black women in computer science and related fields of STEM fields. Over the years, I have observed many talented young women who possess the potential to excel in this field but often face systemic challenges and a lack of encouragement to pursue them. This professional setting has motivated me to explore the barriers, motivations, and support systems that influence Black women to pursue degrees in computer science technology. My commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in STEM education influenced my decision to conduct this research, as I believe that meaningful progress begins with amplifying the voices of those most impacted by underrepresentation. I also believe that lasting change can only occur through understanding the experiences of individuals most affected by systemic inequalities.

As an educator at a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), I recognized that my position may grant me direct insight into the institutional dynamics, faculty-student relationships, and student experiences that shape the academic pathways of underrepresented minorities. I have seen directly how supportive environments can enhance motivation and persistence among Black students, particularly women in male-dominated disciplines such as computer science. However, I also acknowledge that my dual role as a faculty member and a researcher presents a potential risk of bias in data interpretation. To mitigate subjectivity, I will emphasize reflexivity throughout the research process by consciously examining my assumptions, separating my educator role from my research responsibility, and ensuring that I interpret data through an objective lens supported by evidence. I will also maintain transparency throughout all stages of data collection and analysis procedures, adhering strictly to ethical research standards to preserve the integrity of the study. My primary objective is to allow participants' voices and experiences to drive the findings rather than my one expectations or prior experiences.

My personal and professional values closely align with the goals of increasing representation, promoting equitable educational opportunities, and enhancing institutional support systems for Black women in computer science. I believe that representation and inclusion are the drivers of innovation and growth within higher education and the technology workforce. While these convictions inspire my research, I am aware they may also shape my interpretation of participants' responses. To minimize this risk, I approach this qualitative study with an open mind, applying rigorous thematic coding to capture participants' lived experiences authentically. My ultimate goal is to honor the perspectives of each participant by presenting their insights accurately and respectfully, ensuring their voices contribute meaningfully to advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity in computer science education.

In summary, I acknowledge that my professional role and personal convictions shape this research, but I also view these attributes as strengths that enable me to approach the study with empathy, insight, and a sense of purpose. I hope that this research not only contributes to academic discourse but also serves as a catalyst for institutional transformation, encouraging universities, educators, and policymakers to create environments where Black women can thrive, innovate, and lead in the field of computer science.