A CASE STUDY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE TEACHER EXPERIENCES AND PERCEIVED IMPACT ON SCHOOLS AND THEIR STUDENTS.

A thesis presented

By

Michael Lamar Robinson

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Dr. Karen Reiss Medwed

Advisor

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts

August 2016
Abstract

The experiences of students can invariably affect their choices to pursue a career in teaching. As a group African-American male students encounter myriad obstacle as they attempt to navigate the American public education system. Institutional racism embedded into the system has caused nearly incalculable harms to this group. As the population demographics of the US public schools change there is a greater need for more racially diverse teacher staff to present students with culturally relevant education experiences. As a group, African-American males are one of the least represented groups of educators comprising less than 2% of all US public school teachers. What are the experiences of African-American male teachers and what is their perceived impact on schools and students?

Utilizing Critical Race Theory, this case study explored the experiences and perceived impact that African-American male teachers have on schools and their students. All participants in this study were drawn from a low socioeconomic, minority majority middle school with a large English Language Learner population situated in a large urban city in Southeastern Massachusetts. The sample consisted of 3 African-American male teachers, 2 White male teachers and 1 White male middle school Principal employed at the research site. The data collection process assisted in answering the six research questions. The data gleaned from these interviews is presented in the following 7 themes: (a.) How Teachers See and Experience Racism. (b.) How they interpret classism in how it affects African-Americans. (c.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences as students. Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences. (d.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching. (e.) Benefits of African-American Male teachers and Role Models. (f.)
Experiences that motivate and drive their practice. (g.) Recruitment and retention as perceived by teachers.

The findings from this study can serve as an avenue to address the attitudes and practices that create negative experiences in the education of African-American males and other students of color. The findings can also serve as a starting point for addressing biases and racist practices common in the experiences of African-American males.
Acknowledgements

I would first and foremost like to thank my mother, Addie L Robinson for her unconditional love and convincing me to stay in school (RIP). I want to thank my paternal grandfather, Willie Patterson Sr. for providing me with the slave and sharecropping narrative I have relied upon as energy and drive for my achievements (RIP). I want to thank Professor Anthony Van Der Meer, a friend, mentor, and father figure who listened and surgically challenged and shaped my mind to the point of contribution rather than being a victim.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Karen Reiss-Medwed whose patience, persistence, caring, and encouragement kept this Doctoral journey alive. I am thankful for my colleagues and students, Middle School family, past and present for constantly showing excitement in my one day becoming a Doctor of Education. I want to send an “I love you” and special “thank you” to: Lauren, Maya, Ava, Keza, and Bryce Robinson, your patience with me, encouragement, and understanding has helped to power me through on this journey. To my siblings, William and Elizabeth, thank you for believing, supporting and being great siblings. To Ebonie and Shauliea, thank you for believing in your crazy uncle.

Richard and Fanta Booth, Omekongo Dibinga, it has been a tremendous experience walking with you as we all worked towards our respective. To Malik Azziz, thank you man. There has been virtually a village supporting, pushing and prodding me along towards the completion of this Doctoral process. I want to thank Dr. Karen Reiss Medwed for getting me realigned and being that guiding light, being the person who challenged me and pulled out a fire I thought went dormant years gone.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States of America is currently in a heightened state of racial unrest with social movements forming around addressing the historic mistreatment of African-Americans and other minority citizens in the areas of law enforcement, the continued segregation and low quality of the educational institutions they attend, high unemployment rates, and poverty that have nearly become a signature in these respective communities (Elias & Haynes, 2008). These conditions are an enduring part of the African-American experience in the United States and have continued to remain because racial prejudice is embedded into the founding of our nation and is in fact maintained by the institutions that govern, educate, and socialize our society (Bell, 1992).

Along with the continued racial unrest we are undergoing a major demographic shift that will see the historically underrepresented and oppressed groups such as African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans forming a numerical majority of United States citizenry and consequently undergoing the same forms of race-based neglect and discrimination. As with the general population, the public school system is undergoing an even more dramatic demographic change in the racial makeup of the school-enrolled population (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; National Center for Education Statistics, 2015) while not making the institutional changes needed to address the racial achievement gaps inherent in the American tradition of education that has seen minority groups, specifically African-American males struggling with meeting state education achievement benchmarks and have seen this group disproportionately placed into
special education classes and faced suspensions and expulsions from school inconsistent with their small proportion of the US school population (Gardner, Rizzi, & Council, 2014).

In the decade spanning 1993 through 2003, there were dramatic shifts in minority group enrollments in public schools. 64% of new students entering the public schools were Hispanic, 23% were African-American and 11% of students enrolling were of Asian descent. During that same time period, the White student enrollment slightly declined, while this trend in minority student enrollment would remain steady for the next decade (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005; Fry, 2006). In the last two decades, the number of African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans has increased to the point of creating a minority majority in the student population (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015; Fry, 2006: O’Hare, 2011).

**Statement of the Problem**

As the demographics change, so must our approach to addressing the in-place societal norms of gender bias in instruction and institutional racism in education, employment, and policing. Policy and personal practices must make progressive shifts as to effectively address the United States public schools ever-growing diverse body of students’ needs (Moyer-Packenham et al., 2009). Gardner, Rizzi, and Council (2014) posit that when student needs are not properly addressed, the end result can lead to “dropping out of school, special education placement, limited post-secondary opportunities, and low paying jobs” (p.81). For minorities, particularly African-American male students, a failure to provide a quality education can have greater consequences as normed racist practices can have a souring effect on African-American males, leading them away from the education profession and other education intense career options (Tatum, 1998; Simmons - Reed & Cartledge, 2014; Hotchkins, 2016).
American public education has struggled with meeting the educational needs of its learners, as the population dramatically shifts there is a need for creating learning that is more responsive to gender and the culturally diverse student body in order to create greatly improved learning outcomes for the traditionally struggling groups (Darling-Hammond et al., 1996). Presently, White teachers, the power-privileged group whose social norms and customs have been known to consciously and subconsciously suppress diverse cultural expressions, neglect and oppress the poor and minority groups, make up nearly 84% of the teaching force, with minorities, whose inherent cultural, psychological, and emotional states and whose immediate ability to connect and motivate this growing minority population, comprise the remaining 16% of teachers (Tatum, 1999; Johnson, 2008; National Center for Education Information, 2011). For the teaching force, the demographic shift represents numerous challenges to the nation as an increasingly diverse student body requires an increase in teacher skill sets, compassion, self-reflection on historic racist practices, addressing gender bias, and more culturally relevant trainings for teachers whose racial and ethnic experiences greatly differs from that of the student body they are charged with educating (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Culturally relevant teaching in the form of properly trained teachers well-versed in the historical practices of racism and the recruitment of more teachers such as African-American males who share racial and ethnic membership with minority students is increasingly urgent because there are well documented gaps in achievement, graduation, discipline, and SPED referrals of minority males under the current practices of education (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Background
The United States is presented as a melting pot society, however, the homogeneous nature of public school teaching does not reflect this idea of a melting pot. While the US student population has increasingly become non-white, the US teaching force has remained primarily white and female. White females as a group make up over 80% of public K-12 classroom teachers (NCEI, 2005). Females represent 84% of all classroom teachers, while males account for the remaining 16% (NCEI, 2010). The US public school teaching force is overwhelmingly White and female (NCEI, 2010: NCES, 2015). Despite increases in minority enrollment, the profession has remained nearly homogeneous, with white females employed in over 80% of all K-12 classroom teaching positions. The statistics demonstrate an inequality and unbalanced representation of gender and racial diversity of adults as compared to the racial and gender make-up of the student body they are charged to educate.

Minority, and particularly African-American male students rarely see themselves, their culture, and their values reflected by same-race and same-gender teachers in K-12 classrooms (Gardener, Rizzi, & Council, 2014), in fact, studies have shown that many report microaggressive behaviors and low expectations from their White and female teachers (Hughes, 2005). Although studies have illuminated the problem, the teaching profession has not grown to reflect the change in demographics despite studies showing the myriad benefits of having greater gender and racial diversity in the teaching force (The United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2006). Even with a decline in the number of white students enrolled in public schools and an increase in the number of minority students, the majority of classroom teachers continue to be white and female (NCEI, 2010). The recent shift in student demographics in the US over the last decade demonstrates a need for more minority teachers and male teachers.
While other groups are underrepresented, notably absent in the classroom is the African-American male presence. African-American male teachers make up less than 2% of the US teaching force (NCES, 2013). Mitchel (2010) attributes the absence of African-American males in the teaching profession as due to a myriad of variables such as experiencing difficulties as students in K-12 education leading to a lack of education credentials, the premise of teaching and earning insufficient wages, holding a perception of the profession as being feminine, and there being a lack of African-American male role models for them to follow into the field. Having African-American male teachers offers struggling African-American males: role models, someone they can relate to, distinct male and culturally relevant teaching strategies, and an advocate that can serve to energize and inject purpose into this population regarding improved self-esteem and academic performance (Irvine, 2002; White-Johnson, 2001; Brown, 2012).

**Problem of practice**

African-American male students as a group are persecuted across the nation in public, private, and charter schools more than any other group (Schott Foundation, 2010; Simmons-Reed & Cartledge, 2014). Studies have shown that in school environments with large numbers of African-American male teachers, African-American male students do better academically and face less harsh disciplinary actions, Special Education referrals, and other negative benchmarks that have become part of the normal African-American experience in K-12 education. African-American male teachers are underrepresented in American public education in the role of classroom teachers. African-American males make up 2% of a United States teaching force of over 3 million K-12 teachers. As a group, African-American male students are one of the worst performing academic groups, are disproportionately referred for Special Education services, and
are suspended or expelled from school more than any other group (Brown, 2012; Brockenbrough, 2015). Johnson-Bailey et al., (2014) see African-American male student struggles in light of racial and gender mismatch rooted in a society where “Black men are often viewed through stereotypical lenses constructed by the dominant culture and rooted in a history of racial insubordination” (p.10). White and female teachers whom internalize these views perpetuate racism, cultural asymmetry, gender bias, stereotype threat, micro-aggressions, and the traditions inherent in American whiteness are seen as some of the catalysts for African-American male student difficulties in school (Hughes, 2005; Lynn 2006: Johnson-Bailey, Ray, & Lasker-Scott, 2014). Recognizing this dangerous dynamic at the turn of the 20th Century, Dr. Carter G. Woodson (2000) described the damaging effects by stating, “The thought of the inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he entered and in almost every book he studies” (p. 2). An African-American male classroom presence is said to have a positive impact on the academic success and behavior of African-American male students (Simmons - Reed & Cartledge, 2014). Hamre, and Pianta (2001) posit that students may benefit from positive relationships and experiences with teachers of shared racial, gender, and cultural affiliation several years beyond the initial teaching and learning experience. Thompson (2007) echoes this importance by stating, “having someone that looks like them and that can relate to them culturally instills in each child that education is important to everyone….regardless of your background, you can be respected and accomplish many things”. African-American male students seeing an African-American male authority and teaching figure leading their classroom can be offered culturally relevant feedback and the examples may serve to model productive behaviors and lead to motivation for academic excellence (Hughes, 2010).
In respect to gender, experiences with same sex teachers meeting the same criteria offers the benefit of motivating improved academic performance through the acts of modeling, myriad instructional practices, and behavioral strategies (Irvine, 2002). Although this is not to suggest the segregation of learners by gender, it is a practice in line with providing a wealth of balanced diverse experiences where students are able to see various role models positively reinforcing desirable behaviors.

Currently, the diversity reflected by the student population is not mirrored by those charged with instructing them. In the case of African-American students, when they build positive relationships with male teachers of a similar background, an improvement in their behavior and academic performances was noted (Corbett and Wilson 2002: Hughes, 2010). The presence of African-American males in schools and classrooms attended by African-American male students lead to academic improvement (Dogon, 2010). Although the research clearly suggests the positive impact that African-American males have on school environments and African-American males, Lynn (2006) noted “Black male teachers are not part of this increasingly popular discourse on the disempowerment of Black male youth in American schools” (p. 222).

The purpose of this case study research is to add to the body of literature on the phenomenon of the under-representation, their experiences, and the perceived importance of African-American male teachers in K-12 education. This study will take place in an urban district located in Southeastern Massachusetts with a population of 18,000 racially and ethnically diverse students. The participants of this study will be 3 African-American male teachers in an
urban 6-8 grade middle school and 3 White participants: the school's Principal and 2 content area teachers.

**Significance of Research Problem.**

This research study is designed to explore the perceptions, experiences, and reflections of 3 African-American male teachers, and 3 non-black participants: the White school Principal and 2 White content area teachers at this site in relation to the experiences of the African-American male teachers’ experiences and their perceived value and impact on students and schools.

This study holds professional significance because, as a group, African-American males make up 10% of the United States school population but disproportionately make up a greater percentage of the special education referrals, office behavior lead referrals, suspensions, expulsions, and high school dropouts. A more gender aware and culturally sensitive White teaching workforce and a strengthened recruitment effort for African-American males and males in general may offer a different solution for discipline, motivating, and instructing struggling African-American males.

This study holds leadership, student, and community significance as research has shown that same race, sex and cultural familiarity in schools has led to a reduction in Special education and discipline referrals and an improvement in academic outcomes of Black male students (Kinsler, 2009). African-American male students seeing an African-American male authority and teaching figure leading their classroom offer culturally relevant feedback, and the examples may serve to model productive behaviors and lead to motivation for academic excellence.

**Professional.** As a group, African-American males account for roughly 10% of the United States public K-12 school population in the United States. Conversely, African-American males in the
role of classroom teachers make up less than 2% of the teacher population (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). In total, males comprise 18% of the teaching population, with the remaining 82% being female (National Center for Education Information, 2014). This study holds promise in that it may offer insight into better understanding the K-12 experiences and recruitment of more African-American men, illuminating their contributions (academic and non-academic), and offer a more effective approach in retaining African-American male teachers.

**Leadership.** Increased recruitment and retention of highly qualified African-American male teachers could serve to provide a partial solution in addressing the disparities in disciplinary action and special education referrals that have come to mark the African-American student experience in the public schools. African-American males have been shown to receive a disproportionate amount of special education referrals, suspensions and expulsions. These negative experiences have been attributed to cultural bias, stereotypes, and prejudice held by non-African-American teachers (Foster, 1990 add more).

It has been found that over the past three decades, as the number of African-American male teachers has decreased, the number of African-American male student suspensions has increased (Kinsler, 2009). When students of color have daily instruction and interactions with a teacher who reflects their race and culture, it has been shown to reduce the instances of discipline as the cultural familiarity lessened misunderstandings (Foster, 1995).

African-American male students are regularly placed in special education programs based on behavioral practices as opposed to demonstrated learning difficulties that these programs are designed to address (Slater, 2008). An educational leader with the input and concerns of minority
teachers could utilize the material gleaned from this study to evaluate, and adjust current special education referral practices

**Academic performance.** The findings from the proposed study may provide valuable information relating to improving the academic performance of African-American male students. As a group, African-American males are the worst performing group of students in terms of test scores, graduation rates, and grade point averages, but research has revealed students achieve at a higher rate when taught by a teacher of the race and similar background (Irvine, 2002). The data gleaned from this study could be applied to the larger US education system in meeting the needs of diverse student populations and improving achievement.

The current qualitative study will focus on exploring the experiences and perceptions of African-American male and White educators at a Southeastern Massachusetts urban middle. African-American male students make up 10% of public school students and African-American male teachers are 2% of public school teachers and have a very low classroom retention rate. This research explored the factors that lead to their choice in becoming teachers in an urban school district and focused on their experiences and the perception of their impact on students and school in better understanding why they remain in the teaching profession.

The investigation of the understandings of the participants will become a discovery of their beliefs regarding how African-American male teachers can have a positive impact on behavior and the academic performance of African-American male students, in addition to divulging factors, experiences, and programs that might increase African-American male teacher retention. The student population in the United States public school system is diverse and composed of numerous races, cultures, heritages, and nationalities. Male and female children are
nearly equally represented in the public schools, but this equality is elusive in teacher representation of both genders (National Center for Education Information, 2005).

**Positionality Statement.**

Some would argue that having highly qualified teachers is more than enough to offer all learners a world class educational experience needed to become a successful adult. I differ on this opinion. I believe that it is important and greatly beneficial to all learners in an inherently racist society to have teachers whose racial designation, gender, culture, and value system represents the diversity that encompasses the said society. Currently, we have in place a system where more than half of the learners are children of color, greater than 80% of the teaching force is white and female, and African-American male students as a group, are one of the worst performing groups academically, are disproportionately placed in Special Education out of sync with their population size, are largely excluded from gifted and talented programs, and are disciplined, suspended, and expelled from school at rates grossly disproportionate with their population size. The literature base describes cultural bias, racial discrimination, and cultural misalignment as norms that have caused great harm to non-white students. Due to these realities, I believe that the opportunity to experience African-American male teachers and the discernment of their personal views to create a positive impact on schools, academia and students, specifically those students of color, is a worthy topic of research

**Research questions**

The overarching research question is as follows: What are the perceptions of African-American male teachers’ experiences and their impact on schools and on their students?

**Definitions/Terms**
In order to explore the understandings of African-American male teachers’ experiences and perceived impact on schools and students, throughout the study there are frequently used terms:

**Academic performance** - the level of performance a student displays in an educational setting including grade point average, standardized test scores, and honors received (Schott Foundation, 2010).

**Achievement gap** - the disparity in academic performance between groups of students most often used to describe the performance gaps between African-American male students, who are at the lower end of the performance scale, and their white peers. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates. It has become a focal point of education reform efforts (Schott Foundation, 2010).


**Caucasian** - of or relating to a racial group having white skin, especially one of European origin; White (Merriam-Webster, 2014).

**Cultural relevancy** - a pedagogy empowering students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

**Disadvantaged student** - students whose families are, according to a federal standard, low income and eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced price lunch program and other public assistance and test scores are below the 40th percentile (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004).
No Child Left Behind- No Child Left Behind is the current incarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which created the Title I federal aid program aimed at reducing achievement gaps between rich and poor and among the races (National Education Association, 2002). Periodically, the law has been changed and reauthorized; in 2011, the law received the name of No Child Left Behind. NCLB ties federal dollars to draconian penalties for any school, which cannot meet a series of one size-fits-all standards. These penalties especially hurt schools, which take on the greatest educational challenges (National Education Association, 2002).

Role model- a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially younger people (Dictionary, 2010).

Teacher-student cultural synchronization- the connection a teacher and student share through similar backgrounds, cultural identities, and commonalities as well as usually used to build and foster relationships (Irvine, 2002).

Assumptions

Through a case study, lives and experiences can be captured and shared accurately. Through semi-structured interviews, the people being interviewed will be able to accurately express the breadth and depth of their value for African-American male teachers. The data gathered through a case study investigation will be different from teachers of other gender and racial/ethnic groups. The researcher assumes the participants will be able to accurately recall their life experiences. Lastly, the researcher assumes that understanding the experiences of African-American male teachers will be beneficial in recruitment and retention of other African-American male teachers.
Limitations and Delimitations

One of the limitations of this study is the purposeful sampling of African-American male teachers in Southeastern Massachusetts. This limits the extrapolation of the findings to other African-American male teachers in other geographic areas. This study will be limited by the focus on African-American males, it cannot be generalized to a larger population. The findings from this study will be distinct and may not be applicable to other ethnic groups and genders. The data cannot be generalized to other members of the African-American community (women, other professions).

To decrease the possibility of problems that could affect the findings of the study, a list of weaknesses and limitations of the study were defined (Creswell, 2007). The current qualitative case study of African-American males in education included the following limitations:

1. The selection of 3 African-American educators from the classroom.
2. All participants worked in the same district and school in a Southeast Massachusetts urban district.
3. The timeline for conducting the research study (gathering the data) was 3 to 4 weeks.

This case study focused on current African-American male teachers who have worked in the education profession with 2-11 years of licensed teaching experienced and have worked in urban middle schools in Southeastern Massachusetts. The timeframe for the research study was three to four weeks. Within this time frame the researcher utilized this time for data collection through semi-structured interviews with 3 African-American male teachers, 1 White Principal, and 2 White male instructional colleagues.

Summary
In the last decades, the United States education system has undergone a dramatic shift in student demographics (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013) but the racial composition of the teaching force has remained the same (NCEI, 2011). Despite the findings of research showing racism, gender bias, and disparities in special education referral and disciplinary actions, African-American male students continue to suffer as a group and African-American males are underrepresented as part of the teaching force. The current case study research sought to understand the perceptions, reflections, experiences of African-American male and White male teachers concerning their perceived of African-American male teacher influence upon schools, academia and their students. This could hold professional and leadership value and lead to improved academic performance in students of color within the US educational system.

**Theoretical frameworks**

This case study research on African-American male teacher experiences and their perceived impact on schools, academia and their students in a Southeastern Massachusetts middle school was conducted using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework. The issue of the experiences of African-American male teachers in public K-12 classrooms and their impact on student learning and school culture is tied into the issues of race, gender, culture, and the dynamics of power. Due to these paradigms, the CRT framework is ideal for constructing meaning and analyzing this phenomenon, giving voice to an underrepresented and oppressed segment of the population.

CRT recognizes that racism is deeply ingrained into the social fabric of American society. Racial oppression, slander, denial, and the demonstration of low expectations of African-
Americans and African-American males is deeply rooted in our nation’s history, traditions, and Psyche (Hughes, 2005; Woodson, 1998; Tatum, 2003; MacLeod, 2009; Williams, 1994). CRT illuminates the fact the multitude of the power structures that make and guide US law, education, social welfare, and business are based on white privilege and white supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color (Delgado et al, 2001).

Critical Race Theory is rooted in many disciplines, such as law, philosophy, and social studies. It is through its existence within these myriad disciplines that illuminates the ubiquitousness of institutionalized white racism such that its impact would unsurprisingly and inevitably appear within the US educational system. CRT works to expose and reverse the oppressive gravity of racism as to give equal voice and opportunity to all groups of Americans (Stovall, 2005). Stovall (2005) describes Critical Race Theory as “educational protest, as well as scholarship intended to provide new insight and opportunity for educational praxis” (p. 197). The CRT lens provides analyses based on the perspectives of those often ignored, this is done through the process of intersectionality. Intersectionality explores how race, sex, class/socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, nation of origin, and ethnicity interact in a system embedded in white supremacy (Delgado et al, 2001).

Delgado et al (2001) described “Intersectionality” as an important piece of CRT as it examines Race, Gender, and Occupation in light of the oppressive practices within the society. There is value in using CRT as a theoretical framework. This framework provides voice to an underrepresented group and allows their unique narrative to be the focus of the problem and the development of solutions pertaining specifically to the experiences of African-American male students and African-American male teachers and the perceptions of their impact on schools,
academia and their students in an urban middle school. It is essential in examining the ways in which this study’s participants view the experiences and the perceived value of an African-American male teacher’s impact on student learning and school culture in an urban middle school in Southeastern Massachusetts.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The purpose of the current case study was to understand the experiences and perceptions of African-American male teachers in reference to their experiences and impact in urban schools and to better understand why they stay in the profession in a racist society. This research study expands the understanding around the relevance of the need for African-American males in US K-12 schools, variables related to their underrepresentation, their perceived impact on academic, school culture, and insight into why they stay in the education profession. The study is significant in that the information gleaned from it can be used by education policymakers and school leadership to address educational inequality, cultural misalignment, and recruitment and retention of African-American male teachers.

The literature examined factors related to the low recruitment and retention of African-American male teachers, as well as their perceived impact on learning environments and their retention. This chapter contains the following topics (a) Racism and Gender, (b) The Academic Achievement gap, (c) Differential treatment, (d) School Discipline, (e) Cultural Mismatch, (f) Cultural infusion, (g) Recruitment Barriers, and (h) Teacher Retention. This chapter concludes with literature addressing the retention of African-American male teachers.

Overview

In January 2011, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan spoke at Morehouse College, he called education “the civil rights issue of our time”. Education Secretary Arne Duncan sees our education system playing an integral role in the success of students of color early (Whitehouse.gov, 2011). Duncan stated that “nearly 35% of our students in this country are Black or Hispanic, but less than 2% of our nation’s teachers are Black or Hispanic men”
(Whitehouse.gov, 2011). Historically, public education has always represented and enforced a Eurocentric system of values and practices that continuously worked to invalidate the cultural relevancy of students of color (Asante, 2001; Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008).

According to Duncan, “teachers should look more like the people they serve” and went on to explain, "we want to have world class teachers in every classroom, there is nothing more important, but for me, it's also important that those teachers reflect the diversity of our nation," (Whitehouse.gov, 2011). These statements are in response to the fact that the teaching profession is overwhelmingly White and female and represents a historical perspective and practice that has proven detrimental to African-Americans and males in particular... The current formula for American education has yielded uninspiring results for African-American male students and has led to African-American male classroom teachers becoming one of the most underrepresented groups inside of the classroom (NCES, 2014).

**Racism and Gender**

Merriam-Webster defines racisms as, “a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race”. Racism is the practice of mistreating groups and denying them access to resources and a certain quality of services based on the physical appearance of that group. Delgado et al., (2010) posit that the institutional aspect, “racism is part of the structure of legal institutions, but also invigorated by the creativity, power, wit, and humanity of the voices speaking about ways to change that structure” (p. 18). Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) described racism in US society as “ordinary, not aberrational, -- “normal science,” the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country” (p. 29).
White Perceptions of Racism. O’Brien et al., (2009) discussed the prevailing differences in the perceptions of racism amongst Blacks and Whites in the United States. The researchers described Blacks as an oppressed group and the constant recipients of White racism felt in every aspect of life. Whites, on the other hand are the privileged group who benefits from the oppression and slander of the oppressed group. In discussing a seeming disconnect in the understanding of the extent of racism and racist acts, the authors mention that Whites are more prone to “conceptualize racism primarily in terms of individual racial prejudices rather than in terms of institutional practices that harm ethnic minorities. Furthermore, this individualistic conception of racism reduced the amount of racism that participants perceived” (p.1.).

O’Brien et al., (2009) speak to an observed tendency of Whites to deny or downplay the extent of racism. Within this group there lies a “tendency for White Americans to perceive low levels of societal racism stems from multiple sources, including a motivation to deny racism, the standard portrayals of racism in psychology textbooks, and a tendency to focus on the past as a reference point (p. 3). The authors assert that this tendency is based out of a false notion of meritocracy. Acknowledging racism undermines their conception of fairness. The authors state, “An institutional conception of racism threatens the veracity of a belief that the world operates on the basis of a meritocracy. The recognition of institutional forms of racism is in direct opposition to the belief in a meritocracy because it suggests that unfairness is not only widespread but systemic” (p. 8).

Burley (2005) posits, “Since many whites believe that they are viewing everyone equally, without seeing race, they possess the ability to be unaware of their privilege in the world” (p. 118). The result of this denials holds very harmful effects on African-American male students,
the denial furthers the oppression of the nonwhite groups and continues the cycle of racism. Hotchkins (2002) writes, “Deficit perceptions about African-American students as held by White teachers and administrators serve as sources of racial microaggressions within K–12 context. White teachers’ stereotypical perceptions of Black males are due to cultural incongruences that are based on inaccurate racial assumptions of deviance and ultimately create hostile learning environments for these students” (p. 1)

This section introduced a working definition of racism and institutional racism. It explained how racism is ingrained into the structures of the society. It also discussed some of the research explaining the why Whites see racism differently from African-Americans. Lastly it pointed to how African-American males in the K-12 system are harmed through the practices of institutional racism.

**Gender difference and male students.** Mullola et al., (2012), found that similarly aged male and female students possessed different temperaments as it relates to learning and this temperament affects how teachers judge students ability to learn. The authors posit this difference “... in all likelihood, may moderate teachers’ perceptions of an ideal and ‘teachable’ student” (p. 186).

Winters et al., (2013) support the view that same gender and same race teachers benefit an ever growing racially diverse student population, The authors stated “Teachers of the same gender could theoretically improve a student’s achievement by serving as high-quality role models or because they are more inclined to think positively about the student’s potential” (p. 76). While some researchers see a positive correlation between same gender and same race student teacher matches, others have found results that contradict data on the academic benefits
of such matches. Zeeuw et al., (2014) conducted a study in the Netherlands examining the impact that gender match between teachers and students played in academic measures. Their study’s findings did not support an improvement in the academic benefit of such matches “increasing the number of male teachers in primary education may not be as effective to close a possible gender gap as suggested by some” (p. 155). However, the authors stated,

“The enhancing influence of a same-gender teacher may be due to the fact that students identify more with a same-gender teacher and therefore work harder and behave better. Alternatively, teachers may prefer or feel more competent with students whose gender they share, and encourage them more). Also, negative gender stereotypes can influence the way teachers perceive and interact with their students, and have a detrimental effect on student motivation” (p.153).

Achievement Gap

In order to properly understand the phenomenon of the underrepresentation of African-American male teachers in US public schools, an examination of the formative educational experiences of African-American K-12 students must be explored. The racial achievement gap between black and white students is measurable in every tested area of the curriculum, black students lag their white counterparts in every tested category (McDonough, 2010). In searching the literature for an explanation for the black-white achievement gaps, school quality has been repeatedly mentioned as a factor in black student success (McDonough, 2010; Rivkin, 2006); MacLeod, 2009; Irvine, 2002; Eshevarria & Powers,2004). Hanushek and Rivkin (2006) found that historically, black students in black communities attend poorly funded schools with less qualified teachers than white students in predominantly white communities.
Gaps in black and white student achievement have been attributed to numerous factors. Aside from poorly funded and inadequately staffed schools, Coleman et al., (1996) attributed difficulties in sustaining traditional family structures and poverty as variables that lead to the black and white student achievement gap. The persistence of the achievement gap over time, regardless of the legislative, educational, and community interventions has been attributed to numerous variables. Other variables identified include the education level of the parents, household income, the qualifications and competency of the teachers the students are assigned, and structure of the household throughout the education process (Barton & Coley, 2010; Neal, 2006). In respect to the household make up, parents who have succeeded academically have more leverage to encourage their children to succeed academically and take action to help their children succeed (Neal, 2006). Children from single-parent families are more likely to perform poorly on tests and exhibit more behavioral problems in school than children from two-parent families (South, Baumer, & Lutz, 2003).

Discrimination and bias was found to contribute greatly to the disparity in test scores (Rowley & Wright, 2011). The United States has a history rooted racism, this prejudice is embedded into the institutions and the social fabric of this society and its effects can be seen in the black-white achievement gap (Bell, 1992). This problem has repeatedly been addressed through court decisions, Brown v Board of Education of Topeka (1954) and laws, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The US has never known a time when discrimination was not a norm (Bell, 1992). Through laws, police enforcement, hiring practices, media portrayals, and practices leading to blacks receiving underfunded and inferior educations, black students have come to believe they have a cultural responsibility of not
assimilating into whiteness (Tatum, 2001; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Fordham & Ogbu (1986) posited that black students may behave in a way so as not to be labeled as "acting White". Davis & Jordan (1994), found that black males in their study demonstrated psychological difficulties performing the tasks necessary for success in predominantly "White" school settings.

Issues such as the school social environment, teacher selection, class size, student-teacher ratio, and school rules are all affected by the school's socioeconomic status (SES). School is seen as a socializing institution (MacLeod, 2009), students learn through teacher instruction, school culture, and administrative practices what is seen as normal and determine the behaviors and cultures that are seen as abnormal through reprimands and other punitive measures (MacLeod, 2009; Schott Foundation, 2010). Davis & Jordan (1994) posit that males experience difficulties in their educational experience due to the dominant feminine nature of schools. Couple this inherently feminine environment with the lack of cultural synchronization and the difficulties in academics and discipline experienced by children of color is drastically increased (Irvine, 1992).

The characteristics of school environments are seen as important in cultivating student success. Adams & Singh (1998) posit that teachers can have a positive effect on students by encouraging student perceptions that the teacher is genuinely concerned about their well being, are fair, and are consistently providing a high quality of instruction (Adams & Singh, 1998).

Pringle, Lyons & Booker (2010) examined the issue of the persistent racial academic achievement gap between black and white students in America’s K-12 public schools. According to the authors, regardless of socioeconomic status, parent education level, parental involvement, geographic location, and school racial composition, black students consistently trail white student achievement. In their study the authors focused on the educator affiliated factors that
may affect achievement in the group. Their research question explored African-American high school students’ personal perceptions of teacher expectations of them.

The qualitative study included 48 African-American high school seniors at two high schools in the Southeastern United States. Ten participants were drawn from one school where African-American students were the minority, while 38 participants were drawn from a second high school where African-American students were the majority. The authors found three themes regarding African-American student perceptions of teacher perceptions of them:

1. The majority of the study’s participants perceived that racial and ethnic designations factored into how they were treated by their teachers.

2. The authors also found that the participants perceived that teachers held lower expectations for African-American students in discouragement and actions in discouraging African-American students in expected work quality and from participating in honors classes in relation to the higher expectations and encouragement received by their white peers.

3. Most participants perceived mathematical and language instruction related teachers as the fairest.

This study’s results are limited by its reliance on discovering the feelings of the students, the small sample size, and the location where the study took place. These factors can inhibit the generalizability due to the geographic and cultural distinctness of the location. However, the findings can be used to further our understanding of how teacher expectations and treatment of African-American students has caused and maintained the achievement gap (Pringle, Lyons, & Booker, 2010).
**Differential treatment**

Banks & Banks (2009) believe that American classrooms are environments embedded with racial and cultural bias. Hinchey (2006) posits that white teachers brought up and trained in a racially biased system brings those racial prejudices and biases into the classroom setting. Anderson-Clark, Raymond & Henley (2008) examined data from a national sample in order to determine whether race or ethnic identity affected how black and white teachers rated students’ specific skillsets. The authors found little variance between how black and white teachers rated their students social behaviors, however, differences arose when white teachers rated their black students lower than their white students on leadership skills, social skills, and social desirability.

Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that black kindergarteners in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study were rated as having more externalizing problem behaviors (e.g., frequencies of arguing, getting angry, and fighting) than white kindergarteners when evaluated by white teachers regardless of gender and socioeconomic status. However, when evaluated by black teachers, black students were rated as having fewer externalizing behavior problems than when assessed by white teachers.

Through continued examination of the data it was shown that white teachers evaluated black students and students with black sounding names academically and behaviorally more negatively than their black peers and the authors reported that the rating became progressively worse over time (Anderson-Clark et al., 2008). Bell (2002) believes that the privilege bestowed on whites in this society form a wall that effectively blocks their view and impairs their ability to discern the harmful manner in which their normed attitudes, bias, and cultural practices harm minority students.
Brittian & Gray (2014) conducted a study examining African-American students’ perception of differential treatment by educators in relation to the formation of their sense of importance of school and their ideas and place in academic achievement. The study also included an examination of the factors that lead to perceived discrimination in the context of their African-American Culture. This study took place in the eastern United States. The study was administered to 32 middle schools using the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) survey instrument. The study’s sample was made up of 385 African-American students, roughly 50-50 and females and males interviewed in 8th and later 11th grade.

Brittian & Gray (2014) found that disparate treatment early in their educational experience resulted in a deterioration of their perception of the value of school success and “academic self-concept” (P.1) Differential treatment based on a perception of race may challenge developmental tasks that are critical for students’ educational success (Brittian & Gray, 2014). African-Americans students have shown persistence and have overcome these deficit creating experiences (Wang & Hughley, 2012). Schools represent a mandatory path that African-American students travel where they have an increased likelihood of experiencing racial prejudice. African-American students have a higher incidence of reporting perceived race based negative incidents with teachers. These perceived race based incidents affected students’ educational outcomes in that they were shown to impact the students’ sense of belonging, self-perception and their self-perception of academic ability (Kunjufu, 2001; Brittian & Gray, 2014; Wang & Huguley, 2012). The limitations of this study involve students’ understandings of discrimination. The concept can be seen as subjective.
This study can be used in a policy, administrative, and teaching capacity to create learning environments and practices that are more culturally sensitive to the needs and actions of African-American students.

**School Discipline**

School Discipline is situated as one of the most pressing matters in the education of African-American males (Monroe, 2006). In examining three decades of Public school disciplinary data, Monroe (2006) concluded that Black males are disciplined “at rates that far exceed their statistical representation” in the United States K-12 public school system (p. 103). Studying the phenomenon of the racial discipline gap, teachers are most likely to discipline Black boys even when students of other races participate in identical behaviors (Emihovich 1983; McCadden, 1998; Schott Foundation, 2010).

The disparity in disciplinary action based on race holds significance for many reasons. Students’ disciplinary trajectories have been shown to influence additional problems. Disciplinary problems have been shown to correlate with dropout rates and greater career opportunities (Irvine, 1990, Cotner et al., 2011). Irvine (1990) hypothesized that impediments to youths’ success stem largely from a lack of cultural synchronization between students and their teachers. It has been shown that the norms of America’s black and white communities differ greatly. In white communities, the norm has been to frequently uphold different standards of communication, acquiescence to authority, and impulse control differently from the norms in the black communities (Irvine, 2002). This matters because white and female teachers make up over 80% of the teaching force and they often teach and interact with students of color utilizing a
cultural lens of white cultural norms in classes filled with students of color, holding them to culturally misaligned standards (Irvine, 2002; MacCleod, 2009).

**Culture**

Cultural incongruence or cultural misalignment is the notion that a mismatch in the culture of the teacher and student plays a role in the struggles and failure for African-American students to achieve at grade level or matching the level of their white peers (Irvine, 2002; Allen and Boykin, 1992). White teachers and black students are a reflection of their summative cultural experiences, respectively. In school environments the culture of the dominant white teachers clashes with and delegitimizes the cultural capital and experiences of African-American students, thus promoting lower self-worth and lower expectations (Allen and Boykin, 1992; McLeod, 2009; Asante, 2000).

Education as presented in the United States is a soaked in a value-cultural system that values and rewards those who cater to its Eurocentric base (Asante, 2000; Kunjufu, 2001; McDougal, 2009). The current cultural dynamic in place in the traditional US classroom does not recognize the cultural diversity found in today’s classroom (Bell, 2002). While the K-12 student population is increasing in cultural diversity, the teaching force is overwhelmingly homogeneously White (NCES, 2014). McDougal (2013), describes this dynamic as problematic, white teachers who are the transmitter of cultural norms and validation, “too often educational institutions in America take a one-size-fits-all approach to the teaching of students in America, including African-American students, with little regard for cultural or stylistic differences” (p. 438). This normative approach to teaching black students discounts the intricacies of how nonwhite students learn (McDougal, 2009).
McDougal (2009) posits that African-American students as a group are disproportionately placed in special education classes and noticeably absent from gifted programs, but are overrepresented in special education classes and underrepresented in gifted classes. African-American male students by virtue of their race have a higher probability of being categorized and placed in special education classes. African-American male students are less likely to be selected into advanced placement courses, and African-American males least likely to perform as well as other male groups in STEM subjects as measured by standardized assessments (Gurian & Stevens, 2005; McDougal, 2009).

McDougal posits that “a student's educational experience has a significant effect on his or her overall social condition. Education is certainly a social institution that is responsible for the transmission of knowledge. Education also influences social mobility…” (p. 440). This is significant because a teacher’s actions, often shaped by what they do not know or understand about the students they are teaching can cause irreparable harm (Irvine, 2002). Ignorance of African-American history and cultural practices may lead to student behavior being seen as troublesome or due to disability (McDougal, 2009). Cultural incongruence between teacher and student may lead to lower self-esteem, a sense of alienation, and motivation (Madhere, 1999).

Kauchak (2003) sees a culturally responsive teaching practice as a more pragmatic approach to teaching diverse learners. According to Kauchak, culturally responsive teaching takes place only when a teacher "understand the cultures of the students they teach, communicate positive attitudes about cultural diversity, and employ a variety of instructional approaches that build upon students' cultural diversity" (p. 37).
McGrady & Reynolds (2013) examine the phenomenon of teacher-student cultural mismatch. The authors expanded the exploration of this subject by going beyond the Black-White racial paradigm and included analyses of White teachers and Asian, Hispanic and White student interactions. The authors conducted a data analysis from the National Center for Education’s ELS survey. The data was drawn from a national survey of 15,362 high school 10th graders and contained several surveys (student, parent, and teacher surveys). The instrument measured for student race/ethnicity, school and extracurricular involvement, teach and parent background information, and well as measuring for cognitive skills and student behavior.

The authors found that White teachers held favorable views of Asian and White students, but held negative views about African-American and Hispanic students. In examining whether or not nonwhite students were rated better when being taught by nonwhite teachers, the authors found that there was a distinct advantage for African-American students when they were taught by a nonwhite teacher. White teachers were found to perceive the Asian students more favorably than the nonwhite teachers “For black and Hispanic 10th-grade students, there is never a gain or advantage from having white instead of nonwhite teachers, there is sometimes a penalty” (p. 13). National Study, no limitations.

Raushenberg (2014) conducted a study on teacher bias and student grading based on race and ethnicity. The author concluded that “student characteristics are stronger predictors of differential grading than teacher, school, or district characteristics” (pg 1). However, he went on to state that, “Racial, gender, and other stereotypes of student performance also may influence how a teacher issues grades” (p 4).
Douglas, Lewis, Scott, and Garrison-Wade (2008) conducted a qualitative study to determine the impact that white teachers had on the academic achievement of Black students, using an open-ended interview protocol. Their study took place at a majority white suburban school. The study’s participants included 8 Black students, 5 female, and 3 males, all taught by no less than 1 white core content area teacher. The sample included high school students in grades 10-12 each carrying a grade point average no less than a 2.0. The researchers found four emergent themes: 1. students needed to feel respected; 2. students felt that their white peers and teachers held negative stereotypes of them; 3. students felt disconnected from the administrators; 4. students expressed a strong like for the school environment.

This study offers limited generalizability due to the small sample size and its sole use of Black students. The findings from this study show that Black students felt they received different treatment due to differences in their beliefs and background experiences. The authors recommend that more emphasis be placed on white teachers and administrators gaining a greater understanding of multiculturalism and the specific needs of students of color.

The system has in place a set of standards and expectations based on history and traditions. These practices are based upon a dominant culture, this culture is what drives the management of the schools, and these cultural norms, values, and practices of the dominant white population are the standard in which other groups are held to and judged by (Douglas et al, 2008). Douglas et al (2008) posit teacher education programs across the country inadequately prepares white teachers for the successful multicultural education of students of color ((p 49).

Rather than being a periphery component of American life where one practices it or another is exposed to it occasionally, racism is deeply woven into the social fabric of American
society (Delgado et al., 2001). Racism directs how individuals, groups, and cultures are viewed, racism informs the decisions and practices of teachers in classrooms across the United States (Douglas et al, 2008; Delgado et al., 2001)). Education as-is has operated from the default manner of approaching African-American students with a “deficit thinking by white teachers result in the acceptance of subjacent academic performances of Black students” (p. 51).

Green-Gibson & Collett (2014) conducted a study examining statistical data and documentation from two Chicago schools to determine if the infusion of African-American Culture into curriculum and teaching practices had affected the Adequate Yearly Progress of the schools. The study focused on two K-8 Chicago schools. The authors found that schools with greater infusion of African-American culture performed better on the state standardized tests in Math and English-Language Arts.

This study was limited by small sample size. It involved two schools in Chicago and geographic distinctness of this location limits the generalizability of the findings in other cities and parts of the United States. The definition of “African-American infused culture” was not clearly defined, nor did it clarify the exact degree of infusion into the school culture and curriculum that had taken place. However, this study does address the need to explore the role that culture plays in motivating African-American students and increasing the measure of academic success in public schools.

Marvin Lynn (2006), conducted a study to understand the culturally relevancy of three African-American male teachers. This study took place in an urban working class South Central California public school system. This article addresses the perspectives and practices of 3 culturally relevant Black male teachers who worked in a large urban public school system at the
time of the study. According to the author, “racial identity can be a driving force for developing the commitment to improve the lives of African-American youth in urban schools”.

African-American male teachers, through their own unique educational and life journeys accumulated pertinent meaningful experiences needed in addressing the needs of African-American male students through their socialization experiences in their respective communities. For African-American male teachers, competence in African-American cultural styles served as a foundation for their beliefs about teaching (Lynn, 2006).

**Bias and African-American students**

Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge (2016), conducted a study examining 2002 National Center for Education Statistics survey data on teacher bias in racially-culturally misaligned classrooms in high schools. Analyzing 16,810 10th grade teach student interview dyads, the authors found that teachers play an incalculable role in the lives of disadvantaged students. This study consistently demonstrated teacher bias in the level of teacher helps student expectations based on race. Racial and cultural misalignment was shown to reduce expectations for African-American students. In the instance where the black students were taught by white teachers the white teachers help significantly lowered expectations of the black students. In cases where black students were taught by black teachers, the teachers was shown to hold higher expectations for the black students. The authors of the study that African-American teachers held 30 to 40% higher expectations for black students than their nonblack peers. African-American male students were shown to be held too far lower expectations than African-American females by nonblack teachers. This represents a dangerous norm because it represents the “pygmalion
effect” teachers who believe that their students will do well are more likely to act in ways to produce the desired results (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1992).

Gershenson et al., (2015) believe that biases in beliefs are especially concerning if they lead to under investments in human capital. The authors found that teacher expectations may hold the following effects on students in the educational setting: 1. it may accelerate or serve as a catalyst for negative stereotype threat and lead to emotional harm and detachment from education and low achievement or failure. 2. Students cognizant of low expectations may adjust their behaviors to fit the teacher’s low expectations. 3. Teacher beliefs may affect the quality of the educational experiences offered to the students (Gershenson et al., 2015).

Chang (2011) posits that with teaching, “you get what you expected” (p. 198). If teachers are positive on a student and hold high expectations for the said student, the quality of the educational experience and related opportunities will be greater for the student, conversely, if the teacher holds lower expectations for the student, the quality of the education and the related opportunities are diminished (Chang, 2011). Ultimately, teacher motivation influences performance and motivation of their students (Chang, 2011).

Steele (1997) posits African-Americans have to “constantly contend with negative stereotypes about their abilities in many scholastic domains…” (p. 613). He further explained that in order to achieve academic success, students must “identify with school achievement in the sense of it being a part of one’s self definition, a personal identity to which one is self-evaluatively accountable” (p. 613). Steele believes that the maintenance of this self-identity is dependent on maintenance of expectations. If this relationship to the institution of education is broken, the achievement suffers.
Stereotype threat is “a situational threat—a threat in the air—that, in general form, can affect the members of any group about when the negative stereotype exists” (Steele, 1997, p. 614). In such situation, negative stereotypes hang heavy over the group’s head, members constantly fear being diminished to the level of the negative stereotype. In African-American students stereotype threat causes great cognitive dissonance and areas of academic pursuit (Steele, 1997). Prolonged exposure to negative stereotypes about their group, members of prejudiced against groups often internalize the stereotypes, and the resulting sense of inadequacy becomes part of their personality (Steele, 1997).

Underrepresentation

According to Education Week (2016), black males account for roughly 2% of the nation's Public School teachers. Ed Week Found teachers of color are being hired at rates and higher ratios than that of white teachers, but teachers of color are leaving the profession at rates greater than those of white teachers. When examining the issue of the underrepresentation of African-American males in teaching, many variables were identified as deterrents to entering the profession. In identifying factors explaining African-American male teacher underrepresentation in K-12 classrooms, Shipp (1999) cited the following reasons for the underrepresentation of African-American male teachers: 1. “expanded career opportunities” that offer greater prestige and higher wages, 2. an attitude that teaching represents a past option that bore fruit in the past due to limited opportunities due to an overtly racist past, and 3. difficult admissions processes and testing related to licensure and certification. Due to the small sample size and the specific geographic locations, this study’s findings cannot be generalized across the United States. However, the findings from this study can be applied in improving recruitment efforts aimed at
African-American male teachers. The author suggests that recruitment efforts can be made more successful if recruitment programs focus on candidates with altruistic personality traits, job security, and higher starting salaries than careers in business, mathematics and the health sector, and opportunities for advancement in the profession.

In addition, researchers at the African-American Males Into Teaching program at Howard University’s School of Education have examined the ‘‘recruitment, preparation, retention and aspirations’’ of African-American male preservice teachers in the District of Columbia (Brown & Manswell-Butty, 1999). This study explored the reasons that Black men enter the field of teaching and found that they sought to ‘‘make a difference’’ in their communities and felt that teaching was a key way in which to do this. Other studies confirm these findings. James (2002), for example, examined ‘‘the [personal] narrative of a Black male teacher’’ in Toronto, Canada, and concluded that the teacher had important social and political commitments that led him to become a teacher.

Pabon, Anderson & Haroon (2011) examined a pilot program aimed at discerning the challenges and increasing Black male teacher recruitment at City University New York, the Brooklyn campus. The pilot program was designed to cultivate Black male teachers and to assist in their success at completing coursework and to develop within each a culturally relevant teaching practice steeped in their distinct cultural histories and experiences. Through this study it was found that programs encountered myriad challenges in attracting qualified candidates due to problems rooted in their precollege education experiences (Pabon, Anderson, & Haroon, 2011). The problems range from how they are disciplined to how they are taught, which results in distinct deficits. The Black male achievement gap appears at every stage of the K-12 educational
system (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010). The participants in their study came from a range of experiences. The authors concluded that Black male teacher candidates need additional support in navigating college academics, personal matters, and work responsibilities.

Wilson & Manswell-Butty (1999) found that “as a group, African-American males in urban areas are placed at risk of numerous educational ills including: unequal access to formal education; poor academic performance and social alienation at schools; disproportionate percentages of academic and social reprimands, punishment, and suspensions; low expectations for their educational achievement; and disproportionate placement in special education programs“ (p. 281). African-American male students face a plethora of obstacles that hinder their academic success. The authors identified mental health, socio economic, culture, colleagues, and household dynamics as tensions that have contributed to the achievement gap (Wilson & Manswell-Butty, 1999).

The academic and social problems confronting black male students are often further exacerbated by their experiences with nonblack educators. White teacher attitudes and practices have demonstrated insensitivities or disregard of African-American culture and the formative development of African-American males during their K-12 school education (Wilson & Manswell-Butty, 1999).

Even though, with the number of racially, ethnically, and economically diverse students in public schools increasing, the number of Black teachers is declining (Moss, Townsend, & Tobier, 1997; Young, 2000). Foster (1997) noted several reasons for the decline of Blacks in teacher education, such as alienation caused by desegregation and greater career opportunities in other professions. Additional reasons include an increase in testing or scoring requirements
where testing requirements do not predict future competency or skills, and where testing bias relates to time constraints and content toward white middle-class experiences (Foster, 1997).

The study found that Black men’s zeal to teach was supported by an underlying commitment to social change (Lynn, 2006). Black men view teaching as a form of social change. African-American males as a group have the lowest college entry and the highest high school dropout rates out of all groups (Johnson-Bailey, Ray, & Lasker Scott, 2001).

In studying how principals applied leadership responsibilities in diverse school settings, Mabokela and Madsen (2003) found that African-American male teachers felt conflicted as Black and male in a profession mainly comprised of white women. The authors found that the African-American men in the study went through a daily ritual of struggle and compliance to hegemonic cultural norms for fear of being relieved of their job (Brockenbrough, 2012). Sargent (2001) also found that male teachers practice “compensatory strategies” aimed at making them appear less “deviant” to suspicious female teachers and parents.

**Self-perception and retention**

An African-American male classroom presence is said to have a positive impact on the academic success and behavior of African-American male students. Hamre, and Pianta (2001) posit that students may benefit from positive relationships and experiences with teachers of shared racial, gender, and cultural affiliation several years beyond the initial teaching and learning experience. Thompson (2007) echoes this importance by stating, “Having someone that looks like them and that can relate to them culturally instills in each child that education is
important to everyone….regardless of your background, you can be respected and accomplish many things”.

African-American male students seeing an African-American male authority and teaching figure leading their classroom can be offered culturally relevant feedback and the examples may serve to model productive behaviors and lead to motivation for academic excellence (Hughes, 2010).

Rezai-Rashti & Martino (2010) posit that African male teachers have been seen as important in addressing the difficulties faced by black males in the K-12 education system. African-American teachers reported their motivation for teaching included teaching from the perspective of educating for competence in community and culture, and that they consciously fashion philosophies and pedagogies from childhood experiences (Brockenbrough, 2015). Foster (1997) cited five factors of effective Black teachers. These include: cultural solidarity with students, linkage of classroom content to students’ experiences, incorporation of culturally compatible communication patterns, use of familiar cultural patterns, and focus on the whole child. Studies also show that Black teachers serve as role models in classrooms to encourage and motivate students to be successful. Additionally, they bring teaching styles and interpersonal techniques that are often based on cultural influences that are more readily understood by Black students (Foster 1993, 1994; Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lynn, 2006).

The mere presence of culturally sensitive teachers reduced the hostility and anger generated by feelings of alienation that are experienced by many students of color (Foster, 1994;
Lynn, 2006). African-American teachers are as important to black students as they are to white students who profit from the experiences of seeing black skin in positions of authority and influence (Banks & Banks, 1989). In addition, the presence of African-American male teachers in racially and culturally diverse classrooms represents opportunities for all to achieve success in school when they have highly qualified and competent (Teixeira & Christian, 2002). Lynn (2006) noted that none of the studies he reviewed explored the perspective of Black males in teaching Black males. He lamented that “Black male teachers are not part of this increasingly popular discourse on the disempowerment of Black male youth in American schools” (p. 222) Lynn (2006) identified 3 factors that lead African-American males into teaching: 1. the desire to help improve society. 2. Helping the youth find success through education, and 3. Finding stable employment.

Milner (2006) explores the issue of the need and benefit of having African-American Male teachers. His qualitative study sought to answer the questions of “…what features of successful Black male teaching might others learn and benefit” and “what types of questions should we investigate and address in order to improve the learning opportunities for Black students?” The author conducted telephone interviews with 3 educational researchers who have published literature on public education centering on the US Supreme Court’s Brown v. Board of Education decision.

The author asserts that the decline in African-American teachers has had a negative effect on the success of the African-American student population. However, based on the research it was concluded that quality effective teaching of all students can be carried out by any teacher
that was committed and had the ability to make the learning connect to the learner’s culture. The limitations of this study are based on the small sample size of the panel of experts.

Through a series of in-depth interviews, Brockenbrough (2015) examines the roles of African-American male teachers as disciplinarians at a majority African-American school. The author investigates how current constructions of the African-American male teacher effects the expectations on them and how they are impacted when they do not meet those expectations.

This study included 11 K-12 Black male teachers at an east coast urban public school district. The study found that participants were uncomfortable with the disciplinarian roles they have been placed in as an African-American male teachers. Many enter the profession in order to make a difference in the lives of their students but have been forced into being an enforcer in a system that imposes zero tolerance policies against African-American students. This study is limited by its small sample size. However, the findings from this study can be used to improve African-American teacher training, diversity training, and the findings can be used by district leaders to address zero tolerance policies, the disproportionate disciplining of students of color, and African-American male teacher recruitment and retention.

Bristol (2014) studied the issue of Black male retention in the Northeastern United States. When examining the issue of Black teacher retention, he reported that many African-American male teachers were found to be “loners”, the only black male in their school or school communities. Loners experienced myriad feelings regarding this dynamic. Some of the participants in the study reported staying at their current site due to favorable working conditions, while not quite fitting into the school’s social philosophy. However, many others often felt discomfort due to how they were consulted. Respondents in this study reported
coworkers often seeking their input or help regarding difficult students. Most reported inquiries pertaining to discipline, but rarely consulted those regarding instructional practices. The study revealed that black males saw themselves viewed as behavioral manager as opposed to good practitioners of educational theories and practices.

Bristol also found that black teacher hires were grouped and clustered into low-performing schools. This dynamic was often credited as part of the reason why many black teachers left the profession. His study also look at we are black teachers are found in terms of school district demographics, many worked in low socio-economic environments. Bristol found that black teachers were consistently concentrated in high-poverty districts and schools. Many black teachers in exit interviews reported leaving the profession as due to a lack of administrative support and a general lack of collegiality amongst their co-workers.

Whereas the current dynamic of cultural misalignment has existed between White teachers and African-American male students, Wilson & Manswell Butty (1999) posit that African-American male teachers offer a more mutualistic tie-in, their distinct educational experiences and successful interactions with African-American males along this positive journey offer a unique lens and experience which in turn is passed on to African-American students.

African-American teachers’ distinct experiences provide shared approaches to effective teaching for students historically underserved in classrooms. This demographic offer a wealth of largely untapped resource for educators and others committed to pushing against the seemingly unshakeable racial based educational disparities (Hayes & Juarez, 2012).

African-American male teachers have made significant contributions to the field of education in general and to the education of African-American children in particular. African-
American teachers as a group and over time have consistently succeeded where others have failed at effectively teaching African-American and other students perceived as difficult to educate (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Lynn & Jennings, 2009).

As the nation’s student population has become increasingly diverse, the number of African-American male teachers has declined, “one of the most troubling problems facing educators in the United States is that of improving the educational status of urban African-American children, particularly males” (Wilson-Brown, Manswell-Butty, 1999, p. 281). The authors conducted survey research that explored the career aspirations of African-American teachers in a suburban school district and compared their findings to the literature base. The sample size of this study was 140 African-American male teachers in a school district outside of Washington DC. This study is limited by its small sample size and its use of African-Americans and males which limits the generalizability of this study. The authors’ findings state that school districts should erect support programs designed to encourage students of color to enter the education field as well as providing supports throughout that journey. School districts must establish a mentoring program as well as a process of continued professional development geared towards support and retention of minority teachers.

**Summary of the literature**

The literature examined factors related to the interactions between African American students and White teachers in K-12 schools. It also explored the perceived impact of African American male teachers on learning environments, their recruitment and retention in the classroom. This chapter defined racism & White denial of racism, gender mismatches and explored the formative experiences of African-American male students in their K-12 experiences
as it relates to their underrepresentation in K-12 classrooms. African-American males comprise roughly 10% of the US school population, but African-American male teachers make up less than 2% of all teachers.

The literature base identified numerous factors involved in the absence of African-American males as classroom teachers. The achievement gap was identified as a variable that shaped their experience and provided a negative perception of school and the teaching profession. Through numerous studies, students reported receiving negative differential treatment from white teachers. This treatment manifested itself in lower academic expectations, harsher punishments, and low socioeconomic explanations behind behavioral acts.

When examining the issue of student discipline, the literature pointed out how African-American males are disciplined in the form of verbal reprimands, suspensions, and expulsions in numbers that far exceed their proportion of the school population.

Irvine (1990) discussed the issue of White teacher-African-American student cultural misalignment. This dynamic exists when teachers from the dominant culture are ignorant of or dismissive of the cultures of the diverse students they are charged with instructing. This misalignment has been shown to lead to discrimination, lower self-esteem, and low expectations of African-American students. This chapter concludes with literature addressing the recruitment, retention and the perceived contributions of African-American male teachers in the education field.

The United States student population is nearly 50% non-white, while over 80% of the classroom teachers tasked with teaching an increasing population of color are white and female. The findings from the literature can be applied in the areas of teacher training and professional
development. The data included came be used to examine and reflect on existing teacher attitudes and classroom practices that contribute to the achievement gap. The data on discipline practices and Special Education referrals can be used to address these inequalities.
Chapter 3: Methodology

A qualitative intrinsic case study was conducted in the hope of illuminating the clearest understanding of the research questions in understanding the experiences and reflections of African American and White educators as it pertains to the perceived experiences of African-American male teachers. This case study sought to illuminate experiences of African-American males that drew them into and deters others away from the profession, understanding their experiences, and discerning the perceived impact they have on academic achievement and school culture in an urban 6-8 middle school in Southeastern Massachusetts. In this section I presented the rationale for the chosen research methodology, information on the study’s recruitment process and participants, and the proposed data collection, security of collected data, and the analysis.

Research Design

In order to gain the clearest understanding of the experience and perceptions of African-American male teachers and their perceived impact on students and schools, the researcher determined that a qualitative methodology provided rich details, enabling the creation of a fuller picture of the phenomenon of interest. A qualitative research design offered the flexibility and data rich experiences, descriptiveness distinctly found in human experience needed to sufficiently explore this topic of African-American male teachers’ experiences and their perception of their impact on students and schools (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Bogden & Bilken, 1982).
A wealth of statistics are available examining African-American male teacher recruitment and retention, but fail to offer the personal narratives necessary in understanding the difficulties, experiences, failures and successes inherent in the journey of a minority and male teacher in an urban setting (Kenyatta, 2012; Chang, 2011; Howard et al., 2012; Rauschenberg, 2014; Matthews-Whetstone, & Scott, 2015). A qualitative approach must prominently place the researcher as the interpreter and scrutinizer of the descriptive information gleaned from participants through questioning, as qualitative research is an emergent process (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007).

**Research Tradition:**

This qualitative study was carried out from an interpretive context. Studies utilizing this approach are designed to elicit vivid descriptions and cogent understandings of the topic of interest (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The personal experiences of the participants in this study were bound within a specific context: African-American or White, male, and urban middle school teacher, therefore, this methodology afforded the researcher the flexibility to capture the experiences and tie them into something cogent (Merriam, 2009). This methodology enabled the researcher to construct knowledge based on the richly interpretive information, as Merriam (2009) posits that “researchers do not ‘find’ knowledge, they construct it” (p. 9).

**Methodological Approach: Case Study**

In order to gain a wealth of data on African-American male teachers, experiences, and the perceived impact they had at a 6-8 urban middle school, a case study approach was selected. Case study research provides the flexibility needed to extensively decrypt and describe a context specific phenomenon in a manner offering multiple perspectives, narratives, and scope (Yin,
In exploring the experiences of African-American male teachers, the overarching question sought to divulge important formative experiences that lead them into teaching, identified the myriad factors that lead to them remaining a classroom teacher, and to gather multiple perspectives on their impact on the school environment.

To reiterate and elaborate on the points made prior, the contextual components that were explored in this study are as follows: 1. African-American male teachers, their formative experiences in a racist society and their perceived impact on students in a 6-8 urban middle school in Southeastern Massachusetts. Each African-American male teacher brought with him distinct experiences that enabled him to succeed in a K-12 environment that has historically provided racist experiences leading to academic difficulty and experiences that may have dissuaded other African-American males from this career path. 2. The experiences and reflections of White male teachers, their understandings of racism, the impact of African Americans males in classrooms, and their impact on schools.

This intrinsic case study sought to: 1. Understand the experiences and values, support and motivations that lead to their employment as an urban middle school teacher. 2. To gain an understanding of African-American male teachers perceived impact on students and school. 3. To discern how Teachers and Administrators perceive the impact of African-American male teachers on students and schools.

This study investigated the experiences of African-American males and the perceptions and reflections of White male teachers regarding the experiences of African-American males from K-12, College, and in the classroom as teachers and analyzed their contributions to the learning environment and school culture. Case study research methodologies provide an
opportunity to achieve depth of research as well as itemization of question exploration until all research objectives have been met (Yin, 2009). Depth of research and itemization are achieved through compiling diverse sources of data such as African-American male, non-African-American colleagues, and Administration, (Creswell, 2007).

**Recruitment and access:**

In this case study, 3 African-American male classroom teachers, 2 White male teachers and the White male school Principal were interviewed. This research approach utilized a data collection process inherent in qualitative research studies, in-depth interviewing (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1980). The interviews were conducted at mutually convenient public spaces with the African-American male teachers and White male colleagues. The Principal was interviewed at the research site. Measures were taken to protect the identities of all individuals participating in this research study.

The benefit of conducting the case study research approach was found in its ability to present a narrative that elucidates examples and strategies that researchers and policymakers can learn from (Stevenson, 2004). In this case study in-depth interviewing was done through the use of open ended questioning. This approach was used in all individual interviews.

Lastly, case study research presented a flexibility and depth of information that provided the audience an opportunity to draw multiple understandings of the data (Stake, 1988; Stake, 2000). This was an interpretive case study (Stevenson, 2004), the objective of this research was to better understand the phenomenon or specific case of interest (Cousin, 2005; Stake, 2000; Stevenson, 2004).

**Data collection:**
In this research study, the researcher sought to understand the factors that lead 3 African-American male teachers into teaching at an urban middle school and to discern their impact on student and schools. The researcher sought to understand any difficulties encountered during their journey entering the profession, problems they had encountered as a classroom teacher, to identify the motivations and experience that drove their instructional practices, and lastly, the perceived impact of African-American males on students and school. Use of case studies provided a deeper understanding of specific places, time periods, and environments, providing a look into this specific bounded system in a Southeastern Massachusetts urban middle school (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

The pseudonym, Park Middle School, has been employed in order to safeguard the confidentiality of each subject, the middle school, and district. In order to create a fuller understanding of this case study, basic demographic information must be presented in order to create a vividly drawn out experience (Stake, 1995). Park Middle is located in a Southeastern Massachusetts urban district. The School is in a poorer section of town that borders an affluent suburb. The school services a very diverse student body. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Park is a Title I grades 6-8 middle school with a total student enrollment of 522 students (2014). The school has not made adequate yearly progress in 5 years. 81% of Park students qualify for free or reduced lunch. 14% of Park students are listed as students with disabilities (DESE, 2014). 13% of enrolled students are English Language Learners (ELL) and 40% of students come from homes where English is not their first language (DESE, 2014). Park’s student population is 53.3% male and 47.7% female,
52.9% African-American, 3.3% Asian, 16.1% Latino, 4.2% Multi-races, 0.6% Native American or Pacific Islander, and 23% White (DESE, 2014).

Although Park middle is situated in a racially and ethnically diverse community and has a diverse student population, the certified teaching staff population does not reflect the student population. Park has 41 full time content area teaching staff members. 75.6% of the teaching staff is female, while 24.4% is male (DESE, 2015). 85.26% of the teaching staff is white, 13.7% is African-American, with the remaining staff members being .024% Latino, .024% Asian American, and .24% Native American. Out of the 41 staff members, 3 are African-American males.

Participants

The researcher employed purposeful sampling in choosing participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is used by researchers to “discover, understand, or gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). The objective of the researcher’s sampling approach was to provide varied perspectives on the phenomenon of African-American male experiences and their perceived impact on students and schools (Merriam, 2009). Participants in this research study were selected from a Southeastern Massachusetts urban school district through a process of purposeful sampling.

Purposeful sampling was used to extract valuable experiential data from the participants (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). For the purpose of this case study, the research participants were 3 African-American male 6-8 middle school teachers, 2 White male 6-8 middle school teachers, and 1 White male Principal all employed at Park Middle School.
This study sought to explore the experiences of 3 African-American male teachers, an underrepresented group in US public education. It is important to choose African-American males in order to understand their experiences as it related to this phenomenon.

Recruitment and Access

The researcher had access to the Southeastern Massachusetts urban middle school where the study took place due to employment in the district, and previously established professional relationships. Participants in this research study were recruited using purposeful sampling. Creswell (2007) describes purposeful sampling as where, "the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 125). The researcher recruited subjects for this study by word-of-mouth. Being a district employee, he had access to teachers and administrators in this setting and began the recruitment process with the assistance of those contacts. Snowballing was used as a means of acquiring suitable research participants in the time given to complete the study.

Data Storage:

The researcher took numerous precautions to maintain the confidential identities of this study’s participants. All identifying documentation and audio files were maintained on two USB thumb drives and stored in personal safe. All files were password protected. All participant and site names were be replaced using a system of pseudonyms. The researcher conducted all transcription and data analysis of all audio and documentation.

The case study research participants were selected and engaged through voluntary consent. All participants were given the right to withdraw from all research at any point of this
study. All care was taken to design and carry out this research study ensuring minimal physical and psychological harm to their professional standing in the lives of the participants.

All research participants were asked to participate on a voluntary basis. Once the researcher had secured volunteers, each was given a copy of the interview protocol along with a consent document containing information on the purpose of the study, participant needs and actions, time requirements needed for the study, personal contact information of the researcher and all relevant Doctoral program staff. Lastly, the researcher provided documentation on the risks and benefits associated with this study’s participation.

**In-depth interviews.**

In preparation to exploit the richness inherent with case study research, the researcher employed a rich data collection approach during this research process interviews, (Yin, 2009). The primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with African-American male teachers, 2 Colleagues teachers, and a Principal at a Southeastern Massachusetts urban 6-8 middle school.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the 3 African-American male teachers, 2 White male Colleagues, and the White male school Principal who had worked at the site for three or more years. Arrangements were made where the researcher visited the site and addressed all certified employees at one of their monthly staff meetings where he fully explained the study. The researcher followed-up and contacted all interested parties through email and telephone. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder, a cell phone app, and a tablet computer, all data was transcribed by the researcher. Research participants were given opportunities to
review all audio, written, and transcribed data from the interviews, ensuring member check has been thoroughly employed.

**Data Storage**

The data collected from the in-depth interviews were audio recorded using three different devices. These recordings were transferred onto two password protected usb thumb drives. The transcribed data from the interviews were be stored on these password protected usb thumb drives. All hand written notes from interviews were digitized into a portable document file. Handwritten, transcribed, and digitized data was stored in a personal storage safe only accessible by the researcher. All recorded and written data will be destroyed three years after the completion of the research and dissertation defense.

**Data Analysis**

In qualitative research such as a case study, the data analysis process involved carefully combing over and codifying observational notes, and transcribed audio and notes from the interviews while creating a product that is easily understood by the researcher and readers. Creswell (2009) describes the data analysis process involved with case studies as a process that “consists of making detailed description of the case and its setting” (p. 163). In order to carry this out, the researcher must carefully organize the data, divide it into smaller units, amalgamate this data, scrutinize it and discern patterns of useful information and determine the lesson gained from undertaking and share with interested parties. Through this analysis, the researcher set out to establish codes that reflected common themes, behaviors, and phrases.

The Data from this research study underwent an analysis using an inductive approach. Creswell (2009) described this approach as a course that “involves researchers working back and
forth between the themes and database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes” (p. 39). Individual interviews were transcribed utilizing the same alternating approach as the thematic creation. The audio recordings, notes, and transcribed data underwent an exhaustive inspection until a sufficient number of themes had been discovered and articulated in this study. An open coding process was used to link themes to the central questions of this research (Merriam, 2009).

**Limitations**

Research studies natively have strengths and limitations. Case Study research presents both. The strengths of the case study approach were found in the manner in which rich data was gathered (Merriam, 2009). Due to the limited sample sizes, the often distinct settings, and the specificity of the case, generalizability of the research can be limited and thus, a concern beyond the specific research phenomenon and setting (Stake, 1995). However, readers may find that specific pieces of information gleaned from the case study may be generalized to other situations (Merriam, 2009).

Other limitations are time and the skill of the researcher. The time available to undertake a high quality case study can limit the scope of the data collection and in turn limit the wealth of research collected in the case (Merriam, 2009). The level of skill employed while conducting this specific form of research may also limit the scope of the depth and the richness of the data gleaned from the undertaking (Merriam, 2009).

The sample size that the researcher used is a limitation. The detailed interviews encompassed 6 educators, 3 African-American male teachers, 2 White male colleagues, and one
administrator, a White male Principal. This study only sought to understand the experiences and perceptions of veteran teachers in core content areas, males, and the school Principal.

Another limitation was the study’s location or setting. All participants worked at the research site and school district. The researcher was interested in understanding the phenomenon of African-American Male teacher experiences and their perceived impact on students and schools in high needs urban middle schools. At Park Middle School, African-Americans comprised nearly 53% of the student population. Overall, racial minorities made up 77% of the student population while the teaching staff at Park Middle School was over 85% white. The researcher chose this site due to the low representation of minority teachers, African-American males specifically, the low standardized test scores, and the school’s past history of suspensions and disciplinary concerns. The setting limited the ability of the findings to be generalized to other populations and geographical locations.

The reliance on subjective information, subjective/self-reported information gathering, self-reporting of personal narratives are filtered by personal interpretations and may be influenced by participants’ level of recall and connection of occurrences. Lastly, there will not be additional measures to corroborate the narratives of the participants.

**Trustworthiness**

The research study may be vulnerable to researcher bias due to the fact that the researcher is a teacher at a school with low African-American male teacher representation. The researcher is employed by the school district that this study will take place. He is an African-American male classroom teacher at a different site. It is unlikely that the researcher’s role as a classroom teacher and employee of the district represented bias in the collection of data at the research site.
Myriad approaches such as bracketing were implemented to ensure the integrity and the validity of this study Creswell (2009).
Chapter 4: Report of the Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions, experiences reflections of African-American and White male teachers in an urban middle school. The research sought to better understand how their personal experiences and motivations leading them to enter teaching. This research sought to better understand how their experiences with racism guides their personal and instructional practice in interacting with students and how they impact schools. Lastly, this study also sought to add to the literature base on African-American male teacher experiences and to understand their perceived impact on students and school culture.

This case study format was essential in illuminating a deeper understanding pertaining to racial biases faced by African-American male middle school teachers, how those experiences drove them into the profession, and to understand their perceived impact students and schools. Utilizing 3 African-American male classroom teachers, their White colleagues, and the school’s Principal, data was collected and analyzed using an inductive method. To better understand African-American male educators, the reasons why they stay in urban classrooms, and to understand their perceived impact on school culture, a semi-structured open ended interview protocol was employed.

Participant Profiles

This study is comprised of 6 males currently working at Park Middle School. Out of the 6 participants, 3 were African-American (Cassius, Carter, and Patrice), 1 White Hispanic (Che), and 2 White American (Horace and Oscar. The participants ranged in age from 25-55 years, their
experience ranged from 5-20 years of teaching experience. All participants were born in the United States. Horace is the site Principal, while all other participants have taught there from 3-15 years. All participants hold a minimum of a Master’s Degrees in Education.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassius Clay</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter Woodson</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrice Lumumba</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horace Mann</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Diggs</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Che Guevera</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of the Case Study District

Context

This case study was conducted in an urban district south of a major city in the Northeastern section of the U.S. Presently, there are over 18,000 students in twenty three school sites. The student population in this district is 88% minority, 21.9% white. Table 1 provides the ethnicity of students in the district.
Table 2

District Student Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students serviced at the research site come from low income homes as 81% of students qualified in the 2015-2016 school year for free or reduced lunch. Additionally, 30% of students at the site are served by special education programs, and 30% are classified as Limited English Proficient. The Full Time Employee make of this district is as follows: 83% White, 10.5% African-American, 3.4% Hispanic, 1.3% Mixed-Race, 1% Asian, and .1% Native American. The district staff was 19.5% male and 80.5% female. Table 2 provides the ethnicity of the Full Time employees in the district.

Table 3

District Teacher Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>224.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,765.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>413.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>1,702.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Employee Count</td>
<td>2,116.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A literature review provided valuable information about the context of this case study, including the historical disposition of African-Americans in a society embedded with negative stereotypes and institutional prejudices against this group, current struggles in academic environments, and the barriers and tensions associated with their retention in the education profession.

Teacher and Administrator interviews were used to illuminate the community understanding surrounding the phenomenon of African-American Male Teacher Experiences and their Perceived Impact on Schools and their Students. Teacher interviews with African-American males and their White and Hispanic male colleagues were conducted to understand African-American male perceived impact, to address educators’ experiences in K-12 schools, and to grasp how they use those experiences to drive their instruction and the educational environment.

Thematic Discussion. The data collection process assisted in answering the six research questions. The data gleaned from these interviews was organized into nodes and further studied and compiled into 7 themes: (a.) How Teachers See and Experience Racism. (b.) How they
interpret Classism in how it affects African-Americans. (c.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences as students. Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences. (d.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching. (e.) Benefits of African-American Male teachers and Role Models. (f.) Experiences that motivate and drive their practice. (g.) Recruitment and retention as perceived by teachers.

This process enabled the researcher to acquire the participants’ intersecting ideas throughout the interview process.

This chapter begins by presenting the voices of its participant beginning with the distinct voices, experiences, and themes of the African-American male participants. It is later followed with a analyses containing within it a salient synopsis of the ideas voiced by the all of the participants in this study. Included in this chapter is a detailed analysis of the responses from the research questions posed to the teachers and administrators (see appendix C). This chapter includes responses provided by each participant pertaining directly to the corresponding questions. Lastly, found within this chapter are the analysis of the themes that emerged throughout this research and a summary of presented information.

Carter G. Woodson

Carter Woodson is a 45-55 year old African-American male that grew up in poor White housing project in overwhelmingly White a suburban city in the eastern United States. Carter is a career changer who entered teaching after the elimination of his corporate job in telecommunications. He began teaching in the suburb he had grown up in. It was not until his second year in teaching did he encounter racism from the administration and parents in his district. Carter left that district and began working at the urban research site and has found an
environment where his experiences and race have been an asset to instruction rather than a hindrance.

**African-American Males perceptions of racist acts.** In explaining what racism is, Carter said that, "My working definition of racism is another group not understanding, another group, denying another group opportunities just based on who they are and that they're not part of the major group."

He mentions that this dynamic exists due to an historical power dynamic that has seen Whites wielding a tremendous power over and exercising abuses against non White groups.

Carter spoke to how racism affects African-American male teachers,

“*Institutional racism in my view would be that denial of opportunities by for lack of better term... by institutions and education institutions denying people of color the opportunity for advancement most often denying them the opportunity for entry into those institutions. Educational would be the denying of people of color the opportunity to advance into lead teacher roles, perhaps Administration etcetera.*”

He went on to tie in how limited adult opportunities affects students, "*What it would look like with the students, they wouldn't see anybody, if we're talking about students of an urban school they would not see someone that looks like them.*"

**African-American Males’ personal experiences with racism, Undermined authority.**

Carter described an experience with racism he faced as a classroom teacher where the racial dynamic of being an African-American male at a White suburban school. As a licensed full time teacher, Carter stated, "*I could not reprimand the white kids like a teacher is supposed to do.*"

Carter spoke of an experience where he completed the coursework and licensure
qualifications needed to be a highly qualified classroom teacher, but during his tenure at a majority White suburban district his power and full authority as the only African-American teacher in his site was invalidated by students, parents, and administrative staff as it pertained to disciplining students.

In instances where students were being disrupting to the learning environment Carter reported, “I could not stare at the white girls if someone in the class was doing something that’s kind of strange, you would give them that kind of look a lot of teachers do. I could not do that because I made the girl feel uncomfortable and she went to the parent and parent went to the principal, etcetera etcetera. It was stuff like that happening on a regular basis at that school and I think they use that elephant in the room thing, black male and white female thing as often as they possibly could so that kind of colored my whole idea of Education.”

Carter disclosed that although other educators acknowledged the injustice in his treatment, that the problem persisted and he ended up leaving that district in favor of an urban district with more students and families of color. He felt that the change in the location and demographic of the school and district has enabled his authority to be recognized and supported in his practice.

**Theme Two: Interpreting Classism instead of racism.**

**Class as a barrier against racism.** Carter described his experience growing up in a predominantly lower class neighborhood as an experience that shielded him from being singled out by racist acts,
“Okay, I will start with kind of my childhood. Obviously this is a retrospective of you but I think I was fortunate and my family was fortunate in that we did not experience a lot of racism because we lived in the projects. The majority of the people that lived in the projects were white. We were one of the very few folks of color and I think that that made us look at each other the same as we were all poor. New school elementary school there weren’t many of us kids of color in the school but we never felt we were different.”

Carter credits the low socioeconomic homogeneity in his suburban city as creating a set of uniform conditions that provided a sense of safety and community. In this instance he saw poverty as an equalizer in how he was seen as an African-American living in a poor White community. He disclosed to the researcher that had he been poor in a wealthier community, he may have been singled out and targeted for more overt forms of discrimination.

**Theme Three: Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences.**

**Missed opportunities.** Carter wondered how his experience as a student in a suburban high school with only one African-American teacher. He explained, “At the high school it was only one teacher of color and he was a music teacher. Perhaps at the time we were looking at it as something that was impactful from the world outside well then as I reflect on that it’s pretty disappointing to grow up and know that during your K through 12 years you only had two teachers of color. That just limiting the opportunity for them to suggest to you that your value then what some of the other teachers might have presented.” In retrospect, he saw the lack of diversity as a missed opportunity to push and inspire students of color to explore their greater potential.
Direct experiences. Carter explained the difficulty he felt as an African-American male teacher when he entered the teaching profession at a suburban school district. Carter was hired and the following year the administration team was replaced. He explained, “after that the administration totally changed the principal changed, the assistant principal changed, and after that I had a lot of issues and respect the teaching there and being a person of color. I could not reprimand the white kids like a teacher is supposed to do.” He talked about implementing policies and practices akin to what his White colleagues were doing in terms of student discipline for behavior infractions and found that the staff worked to undermine his classroom authority while supporting the similar practices of his colleagues.

Theme Four: Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching.

Autobiographical experience motivating to enter the profession.

Autobiographical experience motivating to stay. Carter feels compelled to motivate students to succeed in a system he sees as unfair and unbalanced against people of color,

“I know that growing up I don't know if it was inherently, parents would say you always have to work harder than someone else. That's the case it's a simple as that. It can't be any simpler than 1 + 1 = 2. You cannot be average because the expectation is that you are not really going to get opportunities so if you want them you have to create your own. The first step of doing that is not being average it's standing out not standing up for the things that people say about you but the things that you do that is a positive.”

After Carter left his job at a suburban school, the experience and interaction he had at his current urban school changed his outlook and provided him impetus to stay. He explained,

“And I don't know if it's directly related to teaching there, it might be. But I know when I
had the opportunity to teach and [name redacted] I thought it would be different, because you know now, not that it necessarily mattered to me that the kids that are sitting in front of me would look like me, that wasn’t really important. But when I got the opportunity to do it in [name redacted]. I realize that’s why I needed to be that’s where I need to be teaching in front of kids that mostly look like me and not just to finish but to be a model, be a model that probably didn’t have no life. Be a model that they can probably say [Mr. Carter] does, that maybe I could do that too.”

Theme Five: Benefits of African-American male teachers and role models.

Role Models.

Carter saw his as equally important, he described the importance of holding them to high standards and honestly explaining the many pitfalls that await young men of color in and outside of schools. Patrice also believes that African-American male presence can enhance the learning environment, “So I think that is the benefit that we bring in the classroom in the educational setting as a whole, just a role model and figure to all kids, not just minority, but ALL kids.”

Breaking stereotypes. Carter discussed the importance of presenting himself to his students. He believed that his alternative approach to addressing student behavior, an approach that is both stern and respectful is more in line with building character and giving the student a quality of respect that they are often missing in urban schools. He has found that students respond respectfully and he is effective without appearing to enforce any irrational African-American male stereotypes.

Theme Six: Experiences that motivate and drive their practice.

Carter discussed his experience as a student and the near absence of teachers of color as a
motivating factor for his instructional and interactive approach with students. He stated, “At the high school it was only one teacher of color and he was a music teacher. Perhaps at the time we were looking at it as something that was impactful from the world outside well then as I reflect on that it’s pretty disappointing to grow up and know that during your K through 12 years you only had two teachers of color. That just limiting the opportunity for them to suggest to you that your value then what some of the other teachers might have presented.” He uses his presence to push higher academic and social standards in his work, “I was there not only to educate the kids in [subject redacted], but I was hopefully there to maybe let them see that this is a person of color, you know what I mean? No different than you, as a matter of fact it’s kind of likeable.”

Theme Seven: Recruitment as perceived by teachers

African-American male participants and Financial Incentives as recruitment. Carter expressed a need for greater financial incentives as drawing factors that could bring more African American males into the education profession, but discussed the further possibility of tying job security into the recruitment process,

“That’s a $100,000 question. I guess the only thing that I think might be, especially with the economy that is having fits and starts and perhaps people still looking for jobs would be to provide some sort of incentive. For me, money is certainly an incentive, perhaps a bonus for coming into teaching and a guarantee that you would not be let go from whatever system you are end at least for the first three maybe five years.”

The research site is situated in a district that has issued layoff slips 4 out of the last 5 years. Carter spoke to the uncertainty involved in African-American males taking the chance on education and finding themselves unemployed, “And if this is some sort of guarantee and a
bonus and I think that would be helpful. I don’t know to what degree but I think it would be better than perhaps what we are facing now, especially if you wanted to recruit.”

**Cassius Clay.**

Cassius Clay is a 45-55 year old African-American male that grew up in a major segregated urban city along the Eastern United States. Cassius comes from a family of educators’, Preachers, and Performances, and Artists. He entered teaching as a last resort after his corporate job was eliminated and he could not find other work consummate with his degree experience. For Cassius, the education was a bad experience he wanted to leave behind. He entered teaching in a STEM subject and found his passion in working with “throw away kids”. He worked in his home city for nearly a decade prior to changing districts and working at the current research site.

**African-American males perceptions of racist acts.** Cassius sees the current trends in the overrepresentation of African-American student suspensions, expulsions, and special education referrals throughout school history as a function of the institutional racism. In asking the question of “who is the teacher and who is the student” he is speaking directly to the racial, cultural, and gender mismatch that is common in the experience of African American males in US public schools.

**African-American male descriptions of racism.** When describing what racism is, Cassius stated, “My definition of racism is when people are treated differently strictly on their parents. That is how I look at racism and institutional racism as far as how it applies to the
school system, I think it's become so ingrained that I don't think people even notice it anymore.” When asked to elaborate, Cassius explained that he perceived that “racism is a normal way of life”. He expressed some frustration given that throughout the history of education in the United States, “Black folk have had to struggle by virtue of just being Black, it has always been that way”.

Cassius also described racists acts as the tracking of African-American, racial minorities, and poor students into low academic groups and school staff targeting these kids based on their fashion style. Cassius, visibly exasperated, states,

“So what does the racism look like? The racism basically looks like a lot of kids who, putting a lot of (African-American and other students of color) behavior kids in the low-low classes, she sending a lot of kids (to the office)...”

In discussing racism, Cassius reflected on his personal experiences with a school integration program that had him and other African-American students being bused to wealthy a suburban town with the promise of getting a better quality education. He explained that initially he was happy because he was placed in classrooms with kids that looked like him and were from the inner city. He had realized 2 years into the program that All of the African-American kids were being grouped together, placed in the lowest leveled classes, were being pushed into special education, and were learning less than their White peers. He talked about observing the continuation throughout his experience as a parent of young men and teacher over the last 10-15 years in teaching.
Cassius described instances where African-American and other students of color are singled out and persecuted based on their physical appearance as it relates to fashion and hair. He spoke to teachers and their habit of,

“Getting on kids for all the wrong things, I can’t even like, getting on kids for the way they dress or the hairstyles or random things. I understand the importance of some of it, but some of it was some of these kids it is so petty.”

Cassius also spoke to the effect that the constant targeting has on the learners,

“and the kids know it's petty that they just they do it almost intentionally and the school system is like all right, and she said that we are going to do this. It is what the kids just wanted to begin with. It is just wrong. They have no clue how to interact with our children.”

Cassius described a situation where educator ignorance or apathy is allowed by the system because the impacted group of learners are non Whites. During the interview he expressed deep frustration with the system. Cassius saw the behaviors as petty and normal in the experiences of African-Americans and students of color. Like Patrice, he spoke to what he referred to as a “disregard for cultural differences”. Cassius saw the system as blatantly trying to impose Whiteness on African-American students, he explained, “They want them to be White, do everything that they do, disregard who they are or where and what they come from”. His experiences and observation lead him to believe that the practice is ingrained within American society and is normal and that it is something that People of color have to learn to deal with in their drive for a quality education and career success.

**African-American Males’ personal experiences with racism.**
**Student impact.** Cassius’ first experience with racism took place during his participation in a school integration program that bused African-American and other minorities from the inner city to schools in the wealthier suburbs surrounding his city. Cassius recalled being selected into a program designed to provide students of color with a higher quality of public education than offered by his city. Although it offered the promise of a higher quality education in a more resource rich district, Cassius stated,

“My K-12 experience was a pretty rough. I was in the [program name redacted for privacy] school system which is basically where they take inner city kids in then bus them out to the suburbs. When that happened I was basically put in the lowest level class that you can be put in. That was automatic.

For him, thinking back, that promise based on the Brown v. Board of Education desegregation decision did not do as it had promised. His family and many families participating in programs like these were unaware that a substandard education was being offered to students,

“I didn't really pay a whole lot of attention to it when I first got there. That was in second grade or so. So I didn't really pay a whole lot of attention to it. And I was with a bunch of other kids who were bused as well and it was pretty okay with me. They were from the [redacted] public schools and of all people of color, so being with people of color made it a whole lot easier.”

Cassius became aware of the disparities in the instruction of himself and other African-American students and White students in the 5th grade,

What basically happened was as I got older I started to realize that the experience wasn't exactly the same. That happened when I was in the classroom where it was like a split
classroom where the teacher was teaching two different classes at the same time. It was our group and she was teaching algebra group. She would just give us worksheets with just basic math and at the time I did not know my times tables and that was basically my whole damn drawback. Then she would just go on to the other side of the classroom and teach the (algebra) class.”

Those early experiences and the experiences he has seen throughout his 10-15 year education career helped to solidify his understanding that “The system is rigged and designed to fail us (African-Americans)...” Cassius explained how his experience as a student, his experience as a parent and stepparent of 6 African-American Male students, and as a teacher seeing these processes play out regularly, “that because of that I feel compelled to work with the ‘throwaway kids’ and let them know what they are up against and prepare them”.

Cassius further described that the racism that African-American male students experience is a battle over identity. He talked about African-American kids in the US K-12 education system engaged in a 12-year long battle with White teachers over their identity,

“So how does racism look? They don't want our kids to look like our kids, they want our kids to look and act like their kids. Our kids know that and our kids resent that. A lot of them will intentionally resist it because it's like a slap in the face and it actually is.

Cassius sees an unwillingness for White teachers to acknowledge the cultural diversity and to practice the type of cultural inclusion practices needed in a society whose public school population is 50% or better students of color. Cassius stated,

You're basically saying like your [students and their families] way of doing things is wrong you need to do things the way we tell you to do it and when they say the way “we”
Cassius sees White teachers acting out an “us vs them” dichotomy where “they” (Whites) are right and the “us” (African-Americans and other people of color) are wrong and to be remolded into a form of Whiteness culturally, in style, and in values.

**Theme Two: Interpreting Classism instead of racism.**

**Class fostering results.** In examining the dynamic that fosters greater inequality in urban and suburban, majority White and majority African-American or minority schools, Cassius points to the difference in culture and class status and the values often associated with them. In looking at White middle class values as part of the reason for the difference in the quality of White schools, Cassius explained,

“*But the problem’s so much deeper than that, but when you talk to people in majority-white schools you noticed that the parents are a lot more involved. Why are the parents a lot more involved? Because they understand that that school is that community and they also understand that school is the doorway for the kids to do something with their lives and that is something that really doesn’t exist in the Inner city.*

Cassius sees education systems as factories that sort students based on their community's involvement. He is saying that White middle class communities push and demand that their schools provide the basic educational needs of their students based on their experiences, wealth, and cultural values that create and sustain the middle class.

Contrasting that view with urban schools and the state of many majority African-American and minority schools, given US history, he sees problems in urban education as partly
being rooted in parent inaction or their ignorance of the purpose and value of public schools.

Cassius spoke to class in partly explaining the differences, from his experiences as an urban student, parent, and urban educator involved in majority African-American schools, he states,

“In the inner city school this is just some place where you send your kid for the day and hopefully they learned something. There is no expectation really that you need to train my kid so that they can go to college. That expectation just isn't there. The expectation is more... you are going to watch my kids and make sure my kid is safe for the day and you're going to teach me some basic things. So that he knows how to read so that he knows how to write...”

Cassius sees class values and experiences as an important motivator in fostering student success.

To him, poorer and minority families of struggling students due to a lack of access and knowledge may not adequately leverage the benefits of a school experience in building success.

Cassius further elaborated, “but a lot of inner-city parents have really no clue what is going on in the classroom. They have no clue if their kid is learning what they need to be learning compared to what someone else is running in another District or not.”

Cassius sees many families internalizing racism and unknowingly harboring low self and group expectations and that this plays a role in part of how parents engage in school. Suzanne Lipsky (1987) posits that internalized racism is the process where “we have been forced to perpetuate and ‘agree’ to our own oppression” (p.144). Cassius is describing an accepted idea that the conditions that exist in largely African-American districts and schools is an accepted way of life. He pointed out the activity and high level of engagement that took place in his K-12 experience in suburban schools and the sustained levels in the towns surrounding his past and
current districts teaching in. He feels that change has to begin in communities of color and that the right types of changes have yet to begin.

Along with internalized racism, he is arguing that class and the values associated with socioeconomic status largely dictate the community’s perception and value of an education and this can be reflected by the level of parental engagement which determines the quality of the schools. He continues by discussing the institutional aspects,

“If these situations existed in the suburbs the parents to be up in arms, the school system with change. The reality is that from what, people who are in charge of school systems, there they're just doing their job and in the suburbs, if it wasn't for the parents demanding certain things then their school system may not be any better than inner city school systems, but because the parents are demanding things and are forcing them to evaluate a teacher or a teacher's effectiveness, evaluate a teacher's ability to teach their particular kid... this colors their ability to prepare them for the future because they're constantly being challenged, and that's not the higher-ups in the system doing it, that's the parents doing it.”

Cassius described how the middle class values compels parents to provide a sense of checks and balances in an otherwise indifferent system. He posits that the class and values accompanied by each drives the difference in the quality of each class group. By default, he sees the education system as flawed, a system that works well only when it is made to work. Cassius stated,

“And that there is a setup because in the Inner city the parents don't have the time and the resources to make all that fuss, and even when they do they’ve incorporated so much red tape that it becomes overwhelming...”
He sees the process for addressing grievances as cumbersome and time consuming, leaving only the most sophisticated parents able to navigate, push, and demanding quality out of the system. He further explains,

“...I don't even think they understand that most inner city parents, if there's two parents in the household, they're both working, unfortunately the majority is single parent and that one parent can’t afford to take the day off to go down to the school and complain about the teacher or complain about a class or a complain about a lesson plan or any of that stuff.”

Cassius believes that the current structure and the way that school is administered does not work to reflect the realities of some poorer communities. He feels that this undermines the success of poorer people and people of color. Speaking to the limitations imposed upon them by their choices and society, Cassius states, “They just don't have that time to do it if they do they put on the kid, they tell the kid to suck it up or you need to do XYZ, or that's no excuse for yada yada yada. But in reality, if the parent had the ability to, they would be able to get changes made”.

Theme Three: Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences.

In response to the “Brown v Board” Supreme Court decision, it was deemed illegal to have racially segregated schools. Cassius reflected on the institutional approaches of the education system in response to “Brown”. Looking back on his experience with an integration program that continues into the present, he said, “It is a completely different world, you may as well have been shipped to a whole other state whatever from inner city inner city kid perspective that's what it seemed like, like we were like nowhere even near our home and being in that
situation seeing different things you realize that you are on your own and you have to figure out how to cope with certain things.”

Cassius described the negative experiences inherent in the educational system as major deterrents to entry for African-American males. He stated,

“I think for most African-American males, if you made it through High School and then you went to college and you got out of college, the last thing I think any African-American male wants to do is take a position where racism is going to be blatantly in your face and not just affecting you what effect than the kids. You can’t help but see it, so I think honestly for a lot of black males why they would want to put themselves into the situation after digging themselves out of as much as they had to. It would have to do it you have to suck up a lot of things and when you get done with all that you really just want to be about moving forward in life you don’t, you don’t want going to have to keep looking back at all the issues you had to deal with and seeing these kids having to deal with the same thing.”

Direct experiences. Cassius saw urban education as a commitment. He was concerned that the system is set-up to allow students of color to be shortchanged by virtue of “who” is sometimes hired. Cassius explained,

“A lot of stuff is driven by money and just by opportunity alone. Honestly I find that a lot of white teachers that are in the other city schools are there mainly because of the money or because they couldn’t get a job in the suburbs where they live. Very few of them are there because they specifically want to help the inner city kids. That is rare, it exists but it is rare. Most of them come do their job and send kids to the office, they want as little
hassle as possible and it’s just going to go home. They will grade their papers whatever the case is and they're done. It is a job, it's a job that pays the bills yada yada yada and hopefully it will lead to something else.”

Theme Four: Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching.

Autobiographical experience motivating to enter the profession.

Cassius never saw teaching as a viable option, “As far as I guess I never really wanted to be a teacher and it’s funny because and my family a lot of the people were either artists of some sort, preachers and teachers. So that was the one thing I did not want to do, I wanted to do something completely different. He was not motivated by past experiences and compelled to enter the profession,

“But I can't say even the experiences that I did have K-12 mainly it heavily affects how I deal with the kids now because I understand you know what these kids are dealing with what they're saying and I understand the fact that a lot of people have pretty much given up on a lot of them. Especially behavior kids.

Autobiographical experience motivating to stay. Cassius is motivated by the challenge of what he believes is an institution designed to fail African-Americans. He stated,

“Racism also makes me stay in, it’s mainly because I see it. I see what the kids have to deal with. When I see it goes back to being part of the system. The system is rigged against us. When you see things happening to certain kids and his blatant, you kind of I take it as a chance to actually talk to them and let them know that I was once in the seat just like you and you can get out of the situation if you really want to. It may take
someone give you a chance or whatever the case is, but you're going to have to really work and be committed to it whether it happens or not.

He discussed his part in informing and empowering students so that that can succeed despite the forces working against them. He stated,

“I told the kids all the time I'm not going to sugar-coat it, yeah there was racism going on, yeah the deck is stacked against you, yeah you are probably here when you don't need to be here and that you are very smart and intelligent person, and I will tell you but no one's going to give you that chance because of the way you act. Is that right no it's not right, but you will see plenty of white kids who have bad behavior or whatever the case is and it automatically give it a shot.”

Cassius described how he observed bewilderment, and apathy from some of his White colleagues as it relates to African-American students,

“Some of the unique benefits in the face of all this racism is one, I think the main thing is that a lot of white teachers don't know what to do with black kids. They don't know how to respond to them. They don't even understand, they are very quick to be like this poor kid has such a very tough life. They will go from complete pity on the kids after having complete disgust on the kids.”

These observations provide him a greater sense of purpose in helping students of color, being their voice, and remaining in the profession.

**Theme Five: Benefits of African-American male teachers and role models.**

**Role Models.** Cassius saw his role as a teacher encompassing something far greater than
test scores and practice assignments. He explained that his thinking on his place in the school has changed remarkably since entering over a decade ago. On describing his influence on students of color, Cassius stated,

“That’s why I started looking at it as I may be the only black male role model that these kids will ever see and get a chance to see and a chance to talk to that isn’t on the street and doing things illegally. I felt it was important that they see that and that I’m approachable than that and they can talk to me.”

He elaborated this statement on role models by saying,

“This is going to sound a little petty, but in my personal opinion especially the inner city schools, inner-city schools desperately need male teachers. They don’t need, they need ‘real’ male teachers, and they don’t really need like, the Black male who acts White. They don’t need that they need a black male who is just being himself, for lack of a better term whatever that may be, they need those people in the school systems.”

**Breaking stereotypes.** Cassius spoke to the importance of having strong African-American male teachers in the classroom. Cassius described a stereotype of the weak African-American male teacher and how students view them,

“They see educated black males who have you as weak. You know people who kind of just go along with anything, I can’t explain it. They’re viewed as very very weak and I did not want to give you me as a free person and they knew I wasn’t. So if it became necessary I would meet them on their level just so that they would know this is real…”

He finds it important to have educated African-American men in classrooms who resemble
strong Black figures that students can relate to and have not assimilated into White culture.

Being that male, someone familiar, consistent, and educated is who he aspires to be for them,

That's been the main driving thing for me to just try to get these kids to have access to an educated black male and kind of change that perception and let them know that you don't have to be this weak timid black male or you don't have to turn into a black male that is acting White. You don't have to do any of those things, you can just be yourself and you can keep the street and you if you want to.”

He believed that a strong Black male presence can serve to break negative stereotypes and present someone more relatable and capable.

**Theme Six: Experiences that motivate and drive their practice.**

Cassius described racism as a large influence on how he teaches and interacts with students, “As far as far as how racism has affected my decision, it's been kind of the thing that's been driving me.” Cassius discussed a common stereotype within the African-American community that the men are inconsistent and unreliable. He stated, “Because I don't like to start something and not finish it or start something and then fail, one of the things that I did notice that I honestly didn't realize the impact that I would have being a male teacher in the school.

But, as I started teaching I did notice there was a big difference just in how the kids responded. It was very interesting. So, all of a sudden race did play a huge part.” After noticing this he said that he became more deliberate in his instruction and interaction with students.

**Theme Seven: Recruitment as perceived by teachers**
African-American male participants and Financial Incentives as recruitment.

Speaking to the possibility of providing financial incentives to draw in more African-American males, Cassius stated,

“The way to get them, my personal opinion is that it all comes down to money. I know that a lot of people are basically saying it, if you raise the income you would get different people but I really do feel like if males, if people of color were able to get more money to work in the inner city, specifically people of color we're giving more money whether it's through a stipend or an extra thing at the end of the year or something, I don't know.”

Patrice Lumumba.

Patrice Lumumba is a 30-40 year old 1st generation African-American male from African parents. He grew up in the research city and describes his formative years as a student as pleasant and free from racist experiences. He entered the education profession after completing college. Beyond not having many African-American male teachers in his K-12 experience, Patrice first encountered the effects of institutional racism once entering the profession.

African-American male descriptions of racism. For Patrice, racism “is when a particular group, race, religion, ethnicity, or gender is put at a lesser standard whether directly or indirectly and it held by a lesser standard, that is my definition of racism.” while mentioning directly and indirectly, Patrice is speaking to the intentional individual acts and the racism perpetuated by the system.

Patrice explained that, “Institutional Racism in education is very prevalent. Ways that I see it is you, everyday practices in terms of disciplining students, who is the teacher and who are
the students. Those are two ways that racism is prevalent in the classroom. Culture, one culture being sort of stigmatized versus another culture. That’s how I see racism in education. And, those are the main two ways I see racism in the classroom.”

Patrice likened the current racist social dynamic to the past, drawing parallels to Jim Crow and Slavery, “I wouldn’t necessarily call it racism. Blatantly like that I think it's more like institutional with most of the students are students of color and the teachers are white Americans. You can easily relate that to the 1960s or beyond or before if you want to say. Back when you had all the slave masters and all the slaves. So, I wouldn't say that the say it is flat out racisms, I would say that it's more institutionalized.”

**Theme Two: Interpreting Classism instead of racism.**

Patrice briefly described the clash of the teachers’ middle class values and tastes against those of the poor students and their hip hop culture. Although they talked about class, it was situated within the construct of a racist society. Class was seen as a byproduct of the racism that African-Americans encounter.

**Theme Three: Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences.**

**The Institution.** Patrice described African-American males’ early negative experiences in schools and society as deterrents that keep many African-Americans out of the education profession. In other aspects of work in this society, one can eventually remove himself from many negative situations. Speaking to this, Patrice said,

“Because I think that kid that's constantly dealing with (negative experiences) throughout education and say that they have to deal with that in the outside world, with the outside
world, if something is constantly impeding your progress, you can move away from it and do something else.

In his explanation he elaborated on how as one grows, they can remove themselves from negative environments and therefore stop certain experiences. He used an example of work. If formal schooling proved too difficult or negative, there exists an alternative path in vocational work such as Carpentry or finding a job that offered training. In the field of education he stated, “With education you need education you have to go to school. If that's constantly happening and education for yourself as a student, that's going to shape your ideas and shape how you look at things from that perspective. That would just deter, it could deter you as a student and eventually as an adult from wanting anything to do with the profession.”

He also talked about the lack camaraderie due to lack of same race peers in the profession. In the United States public education system over 80% of teachers are White females and African-American males account for under 2% of all certified public education employees (NCES, 2015). American schools can often offer students and employee the feeling of being thirsty culture while stuck in a desert. Patrice further explained, “The one big thing that I think impacts African-American males from not entering, is that left out feeling, where feeling that you're all alone. Growing up, once you went to the work profession always noticing that you are one of 5 or 3 black males out of 50, 60 or 100 then it gets tiresome to constantly deal with that, it gets draining after a while. So I think that that is the number one issue that affects African males from entering the education profession.”
In other parts of the interview Patrice expressed some frustration at how common it was “to not have African-American male peers to work, consult, and brainstorm with on finding ways to relate to our students of color.”

**Direct experiences.** Patrice talked about being the only African-American male in his grade area and attending meetings with teachers who did not share the cultural knowledge of their students. He said, “In my short time teaching, so far I have had occasions where I held back on certain things because I don’t hear certain teachers talking about that and I think that sometimes in my mind it's just like okay, teachers aren’t supposed to be saying this or talking about this. But that is going to from experience that isn't similar to my experience. So, not having that that relation throughout my experiences kind of shape of my teaching profession, my teaching and how I handle everything. I handled things with caution because of that.” He felt frustration in not being able to address the tone of conversations regarding students and not working with colleagues that shared cultural knowledge and appreciation with himself and the student body.

**Theme Four: Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching.**

**Autobiographical experience motivating to enter the profession.**

Patrice took a summer job after graduating college. He described his entry into teaching, “So what got me in wasn't necessarily anything to do with race or whatever happens in the classroom or something else, but when I started teaching summer school in [name redacted] and seeing how much of an impact I had because of the color of my skin, then that made me want to stay with education.”
**Autobiographical experience motivating to stay.** In discussing teacher retention, Patrice described an encounter where he was openly discouraged, “There was even an occasion where I think I was 23-24 years old when a lady (veteran teacher) told me to find a new career because this isn’t something that you want to stay with long-term.” For him, the rewards in making a difference in the lives of his students outweighed the concerns over student behavior or political concerns,

“I thought about it for a second but I decided to keep on and pursue an educational career because of the experiences I had and what keeps me wanting to stay in the profession is just the admiration that you get from some students in the classroom and the thankfulness and gratitude that you get from some students when a certain period in the class is over at the end of the year and vacation comes and it is one that says thank you and I do not want to leave.”

Patrice is motivated by the high level of gratitude he feels from the students at his work site,

“7th grade students and 8th grade students just want to come to class and talk about stuff outside of education and that makes it rewarding and it makes me stay inside of Education. With that happening it that makes me see that they see me as a release with that day if that makes sense. With everything going on to seek out a certain person just to talk to fool around to be friendly that's part that motivates me to stay.”

**Theme Five: Benefits of African-American male teachers and role models.**

**Role Models.** Patrice sees African-American male teachers as capable of bringing numerous benefits to the classroom environment based on their unique experiences growing up in the US school system. He stated,
"We bring: 1. Experience. 2. If there is a father figure that is lacking at home, or if there is a father figure we bring that confidence to the classroom. From my experiences a Black male signifies confidence. Bringing that to the classroom is a lot and I think that you can hold yourself to a higher standard and carry yourself where you should be then I think there is a lot to say for Black men in the classroom and what they can bring versus other peers such as the white male and white female."

**Breaking stereotypes.** Patrice sees African-American male teachers as a window into the myriad personalities and career types that African-American men can be found in, eliminating the wide perception of limiting stereotypes. Patrice stated, “We also break the stereotype of being only good at one thing. We can break the stereotype of being certain things because kids can talk to us and ask us questions and we can answer those questions and reshape their minds on what their perceived notions that they have.” Patrice spoke to the power that exists in students and teachers interacting and altering negative perceptions. He further explained, “We bring a new light to the educational field. I think we bring something that is very needed in education. Seeing a successful Black male rather than being on TV or you know anywhere on a court or dribbling a ball or any athletic activity. Seeing a successful Black male in another light, especially in the classroom to give some kids hope and give them a figure they do not necessarily have at home.”

**Theme Six: Experiences that motivate and drive their practice.**

Patrice’s instructional practice and interactive style is highly influenced by being in tune with his learners. He described his motivation by saying, “... I think being in tune with the culture of the students that you are dealing with and understanding what they're going through in terms of not anything negative but getting in tune with their culture being in tune with what they're into
Theme Seven: Recruitment as perceived by teachers

African-American male participants and Financial Incentives as recruitment.

Patrice stated, “...money always vacation time off.”

Experience. Patrice believed that making African-American males aware of the impact and rewarding nature can have on students’ lives could help the recruitment process, “Show them the benefits they can have on the student’s life, how gratifying the experience is when you see positive results with the students in the class or not even in your classroom just in the building. How much respect you receive from the students and how much gratification and love you receive from the students. I think that is one way to make it marketable to African-American males.”

Summary of all participant data. Theme One:

In exploring the subject of African-American Male Teachers, a common factor mentioned as pivotal in the shaping the experiences that motivated or deterred African-American males in the United States Public Education system is the concept of racism. This theme was further broken into 3 sub themes: (1.) Perceptions of racism. (2.) Perceptions of racist acts. (3.) African-American personal experiences with racism. All 6 of the participants shared their reflections, observations, and concerns in regards what racism is and how racism negatively shaped the quality of education experienced by African-Americans in urban schools. All 6 participants acknowledged the persistent role that race plays in shaping the experiences of African-Americans and other minority students.
African-American male descriptions of racism. The African-American Male participants described racism as an exclusionary process that intentionally overlooks or devalues differences as it relates to the dominant White culture. These differences are seen as built into the system and result in difficult experiences for people of color during their K-12 education, career, and life in the United States. As the researcher, throughout the interview all 6 participants acknowledged similar sentiments regarding African-American experiences of racism in education.

Each of the African-American male teachers described racism in the context of treatment. Cassius spoke of it in terms of lesser treatment based on ancestry and refers to it as being so ingrained into the social fabric of society that it goes unnoticed. Carter described it as mistreatment based on group ignorance; Patrice described it in terms of discrimination based on a lack of relating or affiliation. He specifically includes race, religion, ethnicity, and gender into his definition and speaks to the deep seated nature of it being intentional acts and acts perpetuated through the functioning of the societal institutions. Carter sees it as an unfortunately normal and ingrained part of our society. As the researcher, the idea of a damaging practice being “normal” and accepted came across nihilistic. On the one hand, these educators are working to actively make a difference in the lives of their students. On the other hand, the idea that the negative practices are a regular accepted way of life and that people should have to deal with it, it speaks to the deeply disturbing and diabolical nature of racism and the internalized racism that afflicts the oppressed. The population demographic mismatch along with US history has African-Americans and students of color fighting an uphill battle regarding these normal practices in education (Lipsky, 1987). Given US history, African-Americans have never known
a time where discriminatory practices were not common. Many of these norms were internalized as “the way things are”. Reflecting on the researcher’s personal education practice, through these interviews he was made to understand that he subconsciously subscribes to this manner of thinking regarding institutional racism in public education. Like the other African-American participants, he too realizes that racism has been present before and since he entered the K-12 public school system. In his approach he has worked to inform and to teach skills needed to mitigate the impacts of the racism and to successfully complete the education process and move on in society.

**African-American Males perceptions of racist acts.** The African-American males perceived racists acts as normal practices in the US public school system. Throughout the existence of the gaps in achievement, discipline, and special education referrals, the administration, teachers, and support staff have been White, female, and the practice has been socially and governmentally sanctioned.

Patrice and Cassius spoke to the institutional side of racism as it affects students.

In distinguishing individual acts of racism and institutional forms of racism, the participants saw institutional forms of racism as the biggest obstacle because the system in place allows and facilitates the widespread and normal practices described throughout the interviews. Patrice’s description points to a continuation of past processes that sustained African-American subordination. Cassius described racism in schools as White teachers getting on kids for the way that they dress and wear their hair. The researcher has seen one news report every year of his decade long service in education where African-American hairstyles and dress have become the
target of schools and districts.

All 3 African-American male teachers perceived racism as endemic or normal acts within the public education system and society. They saw it as normal to the point where it is an unrecognizable normal, albeit inequitable practices that negative affect people of color. These males pointed to the practice of routinely placing African-American and other minority students into lower academic ability groups, they talked about the discipline gap, cultural misalignment, limited advancement opportunities, and the teacher-student racial demographic mismatch.

**African-American Males’ personal experiences with racism.**

Each of the African-American males discussed individual experiences with or their observations of racism as it relates to themselves or African-American students. Patrice described his struggles with fitting in with female teachers and having a “Black voice” in the discussions regarding student behavioral concerns and awards. Cassius spoke about his experience in a school integration program, and Carter spoke about his experience working as the only African-American in suburban school earlier in his career.

In each instance the African-American male teachers described the racism acts as systemic or a normal part of the school system and society. Each participant claimed that their respective experiences shaped the way they educate and interact with their peers as it relates to educational equity, school discipline, cultural relevancy, and acknowledging student talents. In this section each participant discussed racism, but neither participant discussed or described system ways of addressing and changing the embedded nature of it in US schools. Each saw it as an individual task to work with students and to help them navigate the minefield.
While the African-American male teachers spoke to the institutional side and practices of racism, 2 out of the 3 White males interviewed described racism as individual acts. In describing racism, Horace stated, “When it comes to racism I just think that what people say and what people do are two different things. Everybody will honestly say that racism is a bad thing and that nobody should be denied things because of who they are or what they look like and things like, but to actually do it and actually walk the walk instead of talking the talk...” Che sees racism or a racist act as

“to identify someone based on the ethnicity, cultural background, religion... basically the cultural, by culture and race. Institutional racism in education, I think that's more of a bias because there's so many of one type of person or race and education, call the Caucasian race if you will, that they don't relate as well to other groups or minority groups, Hispanics, African-Americans especially, and I would say it is less racism and more based by class.”

In describing racism, Oscar stated,

“Racism is when a person's race is looked at as a primary identifier of them in a limited way. And I'm just kind broaden that out to how I define sexism, ageism. Is it the perfect definition, no. That's what I have to start with. Institutional racism I like, I always thought the term infrastructural racism was better, but I'll play along. Institutional racism is when limiting factors are built into the system itself in order to keep people of different races down.”

While both African-American and White participants agreed that racism affects the experiences and quality of education of African American students, there was some disagreement in how it
played out. African-American and White participants agreed that racism is a process of denying groups opportunities, access, fair treatment in society based on their physical differences, and ancestry. All agreed that a difference in the treatment of minority groups comes about because they are physically and culturally different from the dominant White group. Che spoke of White culture and Middle class culture as if they were synonymous. He sees African-American male struggles in the K-12 education system being rooted in experiences in poverty. He talked about teachers not being able to relate to students of color because of that cultural difference and class difference and as such, the onus of relating was placed on People of color to assimilate into the “common” or “normal” practices, tastes, and belief systems of the White teachers. Through this explanation, White was normal and other was abnormal and burdened to change.

Oscar acknowledged the existence of racism, but likened it to sexism or ageism. Horace described it as people talking in an inclusive and fair manner and practicing inequality. Che, however sees institutional aspects of racism as a consequence of class differences.

**Summary of all participant data. Theme Two: Interpreting Classism instead of racism.**

Throughout the interviews in addressing forms of discrimination the participants not only inequity represented by race, but also spoke of class issues encountered in US schools. All 3 African-American male teachers mention class as part of their explanations of the inequality inherent in the education system. Cassius talked about difference in working class African-American urban and middle class suburban parents in their access and ability to maintain relationships with schools and affecting changes. Carter described his family’s poverty and the shared poverty in his housing project and classroom as something that provided a cushion against
racism in that “we were all poor and it didn’t matter. Patrice briefly described the clash of the teachers’ middle class values and tastes against those of the poor students and their hip hop culture. Although they talked about class, it was situated within the construct of a racist society. 

Class was seen as a byproduct of the racism that African-Americans encounter.

The three White participants saw many of the issues pertaining to the struggles of African American students and male teacher recruitment as related to class and not just race. Early into the interview Che spoke about perceiving negative African-American experiences as more of a result of class and cultural differences than as a result of racism. He looked at it as a clash between two distinctly different cultures and value systems that could be resolved through assimilating standards and behavioral norms. Che explained,

“I think it’s more class than this institutional racism is more based on different backgrounds of educators that have a tough time relating to the different background of the students which come from in the poor neighborhoods or different regions that the teachers are not from. ... a lot of teachers that didn't grow up in [name redacted] and teach there probably the same...”

Che expressed some concern of alienating White people with the use of the word racism. He explained, “I think folks see this word racism and that’s what turns them off, that whole community that you are trying to reach that middle white class community I think recoils a bit, we can call it classism I think that’s less harmful word, less frightening word to deal with, because I think it's really just communication.” He attributes part of the problem being due to a lack of cultural capital in the lower class. He sees it as middle class white teachers armed with
their culture and values clashing with African-American, minorities, and poor students because they are having difficulty adapting or assimilating.

Oscar sees much of the problem as “infrastructural” and aligned by class, “A great example, because that's not the great definition, a great example is school systems in richer cities and towns would attract better teachers even at lower pay and if they do that did they will have better schools and so if they put in their efforts into recruitment of good teachers then they can keep teachers away from other school systems that are more needy of the teachers. That doesn't mean that they're all good, it just means that they have the means to do that.” Wealthier communities by virtue of their spending power are said to have greater reach in attracting better educators, providing supplies, and maintaining school houses.

Horace spoke to class when addressing the issue of school funding. As mentioned by Cassius, Horace also believes class status determines the community’s level of parental involvement. Horace explained,

“Why it happens I just think of Representatives really kind of caved to the people from those communities that were calling. They don't need the money, they really don't. Their tax rate, I would say maybe some of the communities get 10% aid from the state. Everything else locally funded from real estate tax and everything else. But here it's just not here it's in [name redacted] it's in [redacted].”

Che described African-American male negative experiences as being linked to class and cultural misalignment. He posits that the class values and culture of the largely middle class White teaching staff at many inner city schools presents a tension between the cultures and mission statements of the schools, class, and cultures of the students and staff. Oscar talked
about wealthy communities and their ability to attract high quality educators and cultural misalignment in schools push to college while many homes of the low income students may value a working class push. Horace echoed Cassius’ sentiment regarding the class and values of each parent community pushing for funding and quality of education. All educators agreed that there is a class component present in the experiences of African American students. Cassius, Horace and Oscar spoke to parent engagement and involvement as drivers for funding and quality of education, Patrice and Che agreed and spoke to the how the different values led to friction between students and teachers. Lastly, Carter spoke to his experience growing up poor while living in a poor and White community and that experience serving as a protection against racial bias.

**Summary of all participant data. Theme Three: Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences.**

This section examined specific instances in which they’ve dealt with racism or have witnessed instances of racism towards African-American and minority students and how it motivates them to stay and how it impacts how they interact with students and within schools.

In discussing institutional racism, the participants described instances where they have experienced or seen discriminatory acts play out. These acts were placed into the following categories: (1.) Institutional, built into the system, system wide, and is a common practice. (2.) Direct experiences, these are instances where the participant recalls personally dealing with negative experiences. (3.) Student experiences, these are instances where these teachers recount seeing students deal with negative experiences within the school.
Each African-American male participant described their perceptions of the negative institutional practices embedded into the education system. Patrice discussed how the absence of African-American teachers creates a physical and mentally uncomfortable work environment that may be harmful for African-American teacher retention. Carter described the absence of teachers of color as missed opportunities or encouragement to students of color and the subsequent recruitment of African-American male teachers... Lastly, Cassius talked about the negative effects of school integration programs that bus students to White suburbs and the bad taste institutionalized negative experiences can have on African-American teacher recruitment.

Cassius and the other African-American male participants see school as a transformational process. Cassius and Carter grew up poor and as a result, school has been the institution that has enabled each to rise out of poverty. Each has expressed that their mission was to make an impactful difference in the lives of all of their students, but with extra attention paid to their students of color based on their perception of the education system being set up to fail them. Cassius talked about instances where coworkers’ spent endless time in meetings complaining about student behavior and personality, yet failed to express concerns or share data about students’ academic well-being. Patrice talked about experiences and conversations with other teachers where teachers ran uninspiring classroom lessons and spent time planning their weekends as opposed to improving instruction and educational outcomes. Carter spoke about constantly correcting colleague’s negative assumptions and low expectations regarding their students of color.

Carter discussed his experience of having his authority undermined when disciplining
white students. Patrice expressed his frustration being the only African-American male and dealing with cultural insensitivity. Cassius sees urban education and the education of African-Americans and minorities as more than a job and has found that in some cities, White teachers are approaching the education of students of color as a chore. Because of their perspectives on the problem and their belief about the solutions needed to create successful outcomes for students of color, many White teachers are not seen as deeply committed to the success of students of color by the participants.

**White Males perceptions of racist acts.** In describing their perceptions of racist acts the 3 White male participants described the racist acts they’ve seen as: 1. Perceptions, teachers stereotyping students as being troublesome and coming from dysfunctional households. 2. Negative acts, Teachers picking on students and talking down to them, and giving out harsh reprimands for student who are off topic during the class. 3. Persecution, students being singled out by teachers early in their K-12 education as disciplinary problems and this pattern following them throughout their education.

**Teacher held perceptions.** In echoing Cassius’ take on some White teachers, Horace, in talking about privately held negatively teacher perception states, “and just, I just I think teachers have a like a perception this kid is trouble, (speaking as the teacher) ‘I got a perception why and what the home life is cut like’, this isn't that, they're not going to say, what do you expect, this is their parents…” Horace further explained that the negative perceptions prove to be pervasive. Horace stated, “I think that a lot of teachers even say, I treat all kids the same. It's the same I don't care what color they are. I just think that if the kids struggles it's kind of that in the back of my mind I'm not racist or anything comment it does but I think that some kids are treated differently.”
Horace describes how teacher held beliefs about students of color and their families can influence the quality of the experiences they receive in public schools at the hands of White teachers and other teachers.

**Negative acts.** The perceptions and biases held by teachers can result in negative acts that harm the learning experiences of students. In describing negative acts perpetrated by a teacher, Che shared, “what I see, one of the colleagues that I work closely with. I see a lot of negativity, that's how racism plays out daily. But the way that he talks to students, picks on them, tells them that they don't know anything what we're talking about. In general the student can be misbehaving but it's really heavy handed responses by the colleague.” Colored by stereotypes and negative perceptions of the home lives of students of color, Che used his observations as an anecdotal illustration of how seemingly common or normal behaviors of the teachers adversely affects African-American students and students of color. This sentiment echoes the observations made by Patrice when discussing the cultural disregard he witnesses teachers taking towards the students of color.

**Persecution.** Horace described the inner contradiction of what teachers say they believe and what they actually do, Che provided an example of how those biases and negative perceptions can play out in class, Oscar describes the long term effects of these practices in schools with African-American males and other students of color. In discussing African-American male students developing a “persecution complex”, Oscar explained, “I think that there's a lot of singling out in the earlier grades as a kid, which can lead them to feel persecuted. There's that kind of view where 3 white kids doing something looks suspicious 3 black kids doing it looks bad.” Seeing these practices as a normal part of the American education system, Oscar believed
that it begins in elementary school and follows them into high school and ultimately sours African-American males and other students of color on the public education system, higher education, and career prospects in education.

Each educator spoke to a different form of racism that they saw in school. Negative perceptions, Negative actions, and Pattern of persecution were the types of racist acts the White male teachers discussed. All 3 White male educators described observed or perceived instances where racism affects or has affected students of color. Oscar described the process as systemic beginning in the elementary grades and the singling out of African-American male students. He talked to the bias in disciplining White and Black kids with differing severity. He also described this process as having a persecuting impact on African-American males that continues throughout the rest of their education process. Horace spoke to White teacher held stereotypes and negative perceptions about the home lives of African-American students and how these beliefs negatively impacts the quality of learning and school for those students. Che described instances where he witnessed a colleague berate students of color during classroom instruction.

All 3 White participants acknowledge racism as an inherent obstruction in path of African-American K-12 learning. Oscar spoke to the institutionally embedded bias against African-American male students. Che and Horace spoke to specific cases where individual acts of racism had taken place.

The 3 White male participants discussed their observations and perceptions of the negative experiences encountered by their African-American students in the US public education system and urban schools. Horace shared his observations as a teacher and administrator. In discussing African-Americans and the Black-White discipline gap, he described what he is
seeing in public education and the effects,

“They come in they get in trouble, they get sent home, ‘call my parents’ or not, the kids see on that though, so I think they just shut down. Somehow that needs to get fixed. I just think that even from a young age it starts, you see kids in elementary school are missing school a lot, they are having behavior issues, why? I think that they're just saying he's a bad kid you need to try to figure out why they don’t like school. “

Horace further explains how these experiences sours students on school, “I just think that kids not having that great of experience at school kind of shuts them off. And they don’t like coming to school. If I don't like coming to school why would I ever go to work in the school?”

Oscar described these experiences as culminating into a full on complex, “I think that there's a lot of singling out in the earlier grades as a kid, which can lead them to feel persecuted. There's that kind of view where 3 white kids doing something looks suspicious 3 black kids doing it looks bad. A lot of people have that perspective so a lot of black kids can get persecution complex. Why would they want to become part of something that is antagonistic towards them? ”

He thought that these early life experiences deters African-American males from becoming teachers. He explained the institutional portion of this “persecution” as being a normal process, “I know that K-8 can really persecute black kids. A lot of teachers can and just be unaware, they are just unaware.”

Che described the string of negative experiences as the catalyst for students of color turning away from education and ultimately teaching as a profession. He explained, “That's where the kid’s checked out. That's where the kid doesn't want to go back to school, doesn't care about the lessons. That's when that's what we deal with. By the time
we get them in the 7th grade they’ve experienced 7 years of that nonsense. So of course the kid isn’t engaged and doesn’t want to learn. It definitely creates a negative experience for that student and experience that year after year or maybe every other year maybe 3rd year they experience this. It doesn’t take how many years to get a bad attitude against the institution when the institution treats you like crap.”

The three White male participants acknowledge a process embedded within the schools where African-American students undergo negative experiences. Horace, Che, and Oscar discussed how these experiences turn the affect males off of education and ultimately away from the idea of teaching as a career.

**Summary of all participant data. Theme Four: Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching.**

**Autobiographical experience motivating to enter the profession.** The African-American male teachers in this study represent a range of life experiences and each entered the education profession differently. Patrice entered teaching after completing college and working as a non certified teacher. Carter lost his management job after 26 years of service. Cassius entered the education profession after being laid off from a corporate job. In this sample 2 out of 3 participants were career changers and 1 worked in education as non certified support personnel. Each teacher entered the profession through an alternative professional licensure route.

All 3 men entered the education profession through a nontraditional path. Cassius expressed disinterest in teaching and did it as a last resort. Carter ended a 26 year management career and during his transition a teaching position became available to him, Patrice took a
summer job in at an inner city Summer school program. Each professed that their prior experience as students did not influence their decision to become licensed classroom teachers.

**Autobiographical experience motivating to stay.** Each African-American male educator listed different motivations for remaining in the profession. All 3 African-American male teachers mentioned their motivations for staying in education. Patrice discussed the gratitude he received from students as a motivating factor. Cassius sees the education system as designed to fail African-Americans and is motivated to help them succeed despite the odds. Carter realized the powerful impact that his presence had on students of color and is motivated to push them to succeed through hard work and to inspire them through his presence.

**Summary of all participant data. Theme Five: Benefits of African-American male teachers and role models.**

All African-American male participants saw their value in being a role model. Cassius thought it important that African-American males saw someone that strongly resembled them, a Black man from where they were from that stayed true to himself and is qualified and teaching them. Carter agreed with Cassius and added that African-American male teachers can serve as role models for all students. Patrice spoke about the importance of being a role model, but also spoke about being seen as father figures for those without fathers and being able to relate to the students culturally.

Each educator saw their role as being important in breaking apart stereotypes that limit the scale and scope of African-American males’ work ethic, job rage, perceived intelligence, and
expanding the range in the perception of what African-American males are capable of becoming beyond athletes and entertainers. Each participant gave a nod to the often unstable home environments found in communities of color and desired to be a force that worked to provide important academic and social skills needed to break those negative cycles. Cassius, Carter, and Patrice hoped that students would see themselves in each teacher and feel that they could choose a career in education.

**White male educators’ perceptions of shared culture/experiences.** Oscar sees same race role models as very important in education. He stated, “We’ve been dancing around this the whole time. That things that come from people that look like us seems to be more credible that when I tell Mrs. whoever that her son is going to have my books at home, this condemnation to it, there is criticism inherently and then when it comes from a Mr. Robinson so to speak, there was connection, not criticism, but connection. He saw African-American male teachers as important because of the strained history that exists between African-Americans and Whites as, “White teachers can be seen as the institution, the crooked institution. It wouldn’t matter how crooked or straight it was. Now I can present myself as I work hard and try to build those bridges but they build immediately when you look like each other.”

Looking at the racial and cultural mismatch found between students and teachers in American schools, Horace explained, “It’s very tough to relate to somebody who doesn’t look like you or doesn’t shares the same experiences as they do. I think that’s important Not only at a young age it’s also middle school and high school, all throughout the education they should have of folks that they can relate to and I think that that’s a real important piece of the kind of struggle that we are in right in in the city, I really do.” He explains the importance of African-American
male teachers in urban schools, “It's, the benefits that I see is that kids can make connections to teachers that look like them and may have the same experience as them and talk to him about what it's like when you went to middle school. I think that is so important to have a guide to talk to.” Using the researcher and 2 of the study’s participants as examples, he pointed out, “We always try to make connections with the kids something that experiences that you have that I don’t. Like Patrice and Cassius have that they can bring the kids can say yes I get it Mr. Robinson, I have a question that you can answer, what was it like for you, I can’t because I don't have the experience that you guys bring to the table.”

Che saw a need for African-American male teachers. He saw their experiences as important in offering students a balanced approach often missing according to the status quo. Che stated, “And I think there is a subtlety in the way that they communicate with the student, they maybe not as quick to judge not as quick the place not expect a predetermined standard for this job already. Which is normal it just normal that is an inherent trait that we do. The unique benefit is simply is it’s a role model that they can connect with.”

**Role Models and father figures.** As an Administrator, Horace is made aware of personal and family circumstances of students to a great extent that the classroom teachers are not. From his perspective in his largely African-American and poor school house, “a lot of these kids. Some broken homes, dad may not be an influential piece of the family anymore, that may not be influential piece of the family anymore. Just to have a guy around even when I go around front the kids throughout the day I think its important thing a little bit of wrestling put it in the headlock they need it. And I think sometimes at home with Mom and other people around and
it's no dad that's a piece that's missing. That is just such an important thing for the school, for the kids, just a big picture again to build up a relationship with someone that they can trust.”

When exploring the subject of the importance of African-American role models, Che stated, “It simple, role models. First of all it's an adult male, that's not in jail that's not a drug addict, drug dealer and all these other negative roles that they may see regularly in their community.” Speaking on the subject of role models and breaking stereotypes, he explained that a positive African-American male figure can be a bridge to the middle class,

“Here is someone very different with that middle-class standard. Somebody that assimilated into the community, what's more important, it's critical, I think. Not only is it a benefit but it's critical to have African-American male in the Middle School environment teaching and working with kids because they speak the same language they come from the same cultural background. Now, it doesn't solve all the problems either.”

**Breaking down stereotypes.** Horace sees the addition of qualified African-American male teachers as important actors in changing the perceptions of African-American males in the eyes of all students,

“I think it Breaks down a Stereotype, I really do period for a lot of these kids especially Middle School you have white female teachers in elementary schools. A lot of times African-American males aren’t teachers so they come in see someone of color in front of them and say, ok this is something that's new to me.”

Horace saw the inclusion of African-American male teachers in the classroom as an opportunity to promote a fuller understanding of and to improve the image of African-Americans,
“I just think it would break down the stereotype. An African-American male, you must have played basketball, can you sing, can you dance play football, no. I just think that that is really a good thing for them to see that anybody can go and do anything they want and I think that is, that is important in elementary school they have not had any interaction Other than the classmates that may be of color, no adults in school and school environment here in Brockton there very few people. And if they do have exposure it’s very new.”

All 3 educators agreed that African-American male teachers play an invaluable role in the public school classroom, particularly urban schools and schools with high percentages of students of color. The benefits were described as: cultural alignment, parent engagement, and making male connections. Also discussed in the interviews was their benefit to White and other nonblack students. The benefits were described as: breaking stereotypes of African-Americans as athletes, exposure to intelligent men, and being exposed to African-American leaders, with that exposure setting the tone for student expectations and belief in later in life.

**Summary of all participant data. Theme Six: Experiences that motivate and drive their practice.**

For each African-American male teacher there were poignant experiences that influenced how they teach and interact with their students. Racism, being a role model, and having a shared culture with the learners were reasons given as driving forces for their instructional and interactive approaches with students.
Summary of all participant data. Theme Seven: Recruitment as perceived by teachers.

All participants saw the importance of recruiting African-American males in urban schools. Based on the interview data I have broken the theme of African-American male teacher recruitment into three sub themes: (1.) Early Recruitment, (2.) Financial Incentives, and (3.) Experience.

African-American male participants and Financial Incentives as recruitment. All 3 participants saw financial incentives as key to increasing the recruitment of African-American males. The 3 African-American male teachers shared the same idea of providing financial incentives to attract more African-American Males. Patrice placed a smaller emphasis on the financial incentive and included the idea of marketing the work schedule as a selling point. Patrice and Carter spoke more in depth to the idea of providing financial incentives. Cassius talked to providing additional pay to African-American male teachers while Carter spoke on incentives and guaranteed job security.

Experience. Throughout the interview process 4 of the 6 participants talked about using experiences to draw in more African-American males. Carter and Cassius did not express opinions on using experiences to draw in African-American males into teaching. The other 4 participants (Che, Cassius, Oscar, and Horace) discussed the benefit of promoting the impact that experiences in education can have on recruiting African-American males.

White male participants and Financial Incentives as recruitment. In discussing the use of financial incentives to attract African-American male teachers, Oscar stated, “Could you have a private program that does that, maybe, the black teacher recruitment program paid for by the company, I'd be all for that but that's private. Private money would be an idea.”
Che saw financial incentives as needed to draw in more African-American males. He stated, “Have some programs to pay or get some scholarships for money... you gotta make this enticing to get these people in the industry. One of the reasons I joined was the schedule. It was the ability to be with my family as much as possible and make a decent wage.” Looking at the process involved in becoming an educator, Che further stated, “It's going to cost money, that's the biggest problem right? You gotta pay and it can be scholarships, maybe a grant, or maybe like loan forgiveness. You gotta have it. What? Title 1 schools those people are on the front lines, and help us because that's what we need.” Horace stated, “The other thing is even if we can't do that there has to be some sort of incentive to lessen the burden of the cost of school. If we can somehow go to (State Colleges), will help pay loans, will give you some forgiveness here whatever, whatever it may be that may entice folks that may not be able to afford College, just give them an opportunity.”

All participants agreed that financial incentives were an important part of drawing more African-American males into teaching. However, there was some disagreement in how this should be carried out. Oscar, Che, and Cassius felt that the financial incentive should be separate from the standard teacher pay system. Each felt that stipends and grants independent from the district pay system should be used. All agreed on the financial incentive for African-American male recruits, but Carter, Horace, and Che felt that African-American males should receive financial support during the teacher education degree process.
Conclusion: Narrative response to themes

Introduction. As an African-American male, parent, and educator the subject of this case study held a special significance to me. Growing up in the United States, there seems to be multiple views on justice, equality, quality of life, the value of life, and on the definition and appropriate manner and time to … (Mention Blacks waiting). As such, being African-American, my distinct experience of growing up and being the constant victim of overt acts of racism and the constant target of institutional acts of racism. Living here makes it virtually impossible to avoid its oppressive glares as it inhabits every institution, every piece of infrastructure that is the United States of America and her territories.

In this case study I explored the experiences of African-American male teachers and their perceived impact on students and schools. This particular subject is important because school is a law mandated 13 year process. The law makes attendance mandatory, but the law did not take into account the quality of learning and interactions that are to take place over those 13 years. School in America, like all other institutions were never designed with African-Americans in mind. They were never set up to build our self-worth, develop higher order thinking skills, nor push us out into the world as bosses and managers. School has been a place used to place and keep us in an inferior place.

Themes. In this section I will provide a narrative response to the themes of this study. Through the analysis of the data 7 themes emerged from the 6 semi-structured interviews:

(a.) How Teachers See and Experience Racism and (b.) How they interpret Classism in how it affects African-Americans. I think the most shocking piece dealing with this study was the huge differences illuminated in the understanding of the definition of racism and the extent to
which and how it affects African-Americans. Each African-American respondent described it as a system in which people of color were discriminated and denied opportunities based on their physical appearance not being White. In their descriptions, racism was a normal way of American life that did not exempt any of us. Racism is found in everything ranging from who gets to vote, who and how one is policed, the severity of prison sentencing, where one is able to live, how one reacts to an African-American getting on an elevator, perceptions of how one got into college and how they got a job. It also affects how much I will pay for a car, the interest on a car loan, if I will get hired, how much my home mortgage interest rate is, and the quality of medical services I will receive and the quality of my K-12 experiences and quality of my education. For the nonblack respondents, racism was more of a compartmentalized occurrence that was carried out by individuals and could be corrected by addressing the actors or through assimilation. As an African-American at the Doctorate level, the meritocracy piece seemingly holds weight, however, as I look around me, I see that the door of opportunity wasn’t wide enough to provide entry to others of African-American ancestry. Also, studies have shown that assimilation into the middle class has not made much of a difference in school discipline, special education referrals, raising the expectations of African-American students by the largely White teacher population, and the achievement gap. The findings on the perception of racism among educators was very shocking.

**(c.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences as students and observations and (d.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching.** Another very important theme that emerged from this research was the experiences of the teachers and their observations of the experiences of the students. Patrice was the most vocal in describing instances where the
cultural values of the teachers served to invalidate the cultural values of the students. He reminded me that the job of the teacher is to meet students where they are and to develop skills on top of who they are as the shortest distance to building success. Oscar talked to the normal occurrence of Black kids being singled out beginning in elementary school and developing a persecution complex as they continue on with their education. In each interview there was an acknowledgement of this problem, it is written about extensively in the scholarly literature as well, yet the practice persists. This goes back to the data that emerged from the theme on racism. If the people in the classrooms and those in power perceive racism as an individual action and ignore the institutional oppression, the problem will persist and African-Americans and other students of color will continue to be harmed. This perception has to change if we are to make progress against oppression.

African-American teachers were asked how knowledge and experiences with racism guided their practice. Each teacher spoke to being patient, holding students to higher standards and placing more effort into drawing quality out of them. Teachers also spoke to the manner in which they disciplined students and acknowledging race and discussing with their students the difficult task that lay ahead of them and how racism will be an obstacle that they must overcome. I remember instances during my K-12 education where my African-American teachers and some of the White males would talk with me about this. It is imperative that in a system embedded with rational oppression, that teachers be cognizant of this reality and that they tactfully address this with their students.

(e.) Benefits of African-American Male teachers and Role Models and (f.) Experiences that motivate and drive their practice. During the interviews I agreed with all of the sentiments
expressed. I recall experiences when I have walked into the cafeteria or auditorium and have seen the numerous chocolate faces light up as homeroom assignments were given out. I recall kids from all different grade levels coming to my classroom to visit and talk to the first African-American male teacher and these students telling me how they appreciated me and how it has inspired them. Personally I have the experience of being that familiar Black face in the room full of white faces often perceived as hostile to African-American parents and other parents of color. I can recall several instances where during group meetings parents have talked directly to me and have stopped and confided and talked to me after the official meeting had ended. I recall experiences of diffusing potentially volatile situations with teachers, explaining Black cultural nuances, and pointing out ethnocentric follies, biases, and mistakes in regards to the point of awards and the uselessness of punitive actions that do not offer poignant learned experiences. Upon completion of this study I realize that there is a lot of work that needs to be done specifically involving teaching the adults to recognize the complexity and depth at which racism permeates our society and their psyche.

If all lives truly matter, this should extend into education and should promote a willingness to examine their individual roles in maintaining the status quo in deeply ingrain processes and practices of racial prejudice against students of color in the American Public Education system.

(g.) Recruitment and retention as perceived by teachers. In this theme there was some agreement on certain steps that should be taken in respect to recruiting African-American males into the teaching profession. All participants saw financial incentives as key to drawing African-American males into teaching. Carter suggested that a guarantee of job security for a selected
time period would be key. Although there was unanimous agreement to the financial incentives, disagreement arose in how to fund it. Going back to the meritocracy ideals, I found that the nonblack participants felt a separate grant based funding source should be used to fund such programs, while the African-American participants saw the disparities as a function of institutionalized racism and did not see a problem with a city funding solution, as the city or institution is the root cause of the problems. Also, beyond the financial incentive, experience was mentioned as a possible recruitment tool. The rationale involved allowing them to experience the rewarding feeling of making connections, understanding the pay scale and summer breaks may provide an added incentive to entry.

This case study holds significance in that the findings can be used to discern how Patrice, Cassius, and Carter were able to successfully navigate a system seemingly designed to fail them, go on to successfully complete college programs and eventually return to an institution that has successfully taken the souls of countless other African-American males, turning them away from the profession. It also presents an opportunity to explore different ideas presented by all of the participants for ways at pointing out problems and correcting them. The findings can serve at addressing the contrasting views of racism and how it operates individually versus systematically.
Chapter 5: Analysis of Data

Introduction

This concluding chapter presents a brief description of the study and a description of how it answers the research questions. The analysis of this process and the resulting data are interpreted through the presented theoretical lens and the review of literature. Included here is a discussion of the implications it has on future research in the area of examining African-American male teachers and their perceived impact on students and their schools.

Societal practices choose to ignore the commonality of human biology in order to further inequality due to the interests of elites and “the shifting needs of the labor market (Delgado and Stefancic, 2010, p. 30). CRT uses intersectionality to examine and illuminate the multidimensional manner in which people are oppressed based on race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation and physical health.

Revisiting the Problem of Practice

Prior chapters discussed the various deficits that African-Americans face while enrolled in the K-12 public school system. The American public education system student demographics have changed over time, but the teaching force has not grown to reflect this as over 82% of teachers are White females (NCES, 2015) and this cultural mismatch has continued an historical practice of oppressing African-American students through unequal funding, lower teacher expectations, microaggressions, lower selection into gifted and talented programs, and higher referral rates into Special Education and disproportionate disciplinary actions taken against African-Americans (Gardner, Rizzi, & Council, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 1996; Brown-
Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). In the research literature the experiences and perceived impact on students and schools of African-American males as told through their voices is not yet prominent in the research in this field.

The findings discussed in this chapter holds significance in how the data may be used to drive professional development, the understanding of barriers encountered by African-Americans, other people of color, and students, and aid in the recruitment and retention of African-American male teachers. Lastly, this chapter discusses the researcher’s future research as guided by the results of this study and concludes with how this process has influenced changes in perception and practice of the researcher as public school educator.

Revisiting the Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to investigate the experiences and perceptions of African-American male teachers in an urban middle school. This study utilized 3 African-American male classroom teachers, their White colleagues, and the school’s Principal. To better understand African-American male educators, the reasons why they stay in urban classrooms, and to understand their perceived impact on school culture, a semi-structured open ended interview protocol was employed.

The research sought to better understand how their personal experiences motivated them to enter teaching and to better understand how their experiences with racism guides their personal and instructional practice in interacting with students and how they impact schools. This case study helped to illuminate racial biases witnessed and faced by African-American males through their own voice and though the reflections of their colleagues and to ascertain how those experiences impact the way they approach the profession, and to understand their
perceived impact students and schools. This study also sought to add to the literature base on African-American male teacher experiences and to better understand their perceived impact on students and schools.

This study employed 6 currently employed urban middle school educators in a city in the Northeastern United States. This sample consisted of 3 African-American male classroom teachers, 2 White male classroom teachers, and 1 White male school Principal. Throughout the interview process the researcher encouraged the participants to voice their understanding of the phenomena of study.

The overarching research question that guided this study was, “What are the African-American male teachers’ experiences and perceptions of their impact on schools and on their students?” Through an exhaustive data analysis process 7 themes emerged from the individual interviews: (a.) How teachers see and experience racism. (b.) How they interpret classism in how it affects African-Americans. (c.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences as students. Teacher’s negative experiences relived as they witness their students experience negative experiences. (d.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching. (e.) Benefits of African-American Male teachers and Role Models. (f.) Experiences that motivate and drive their practice. (g.) Recruitment and retention as perceived by teachers.

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework was used formulate research questions and to draw out a deeper understanding of their perceptions relating to their experiences and impact that African-American males have on students and schools through the unique voices of the research participants. The analysis of the 6 individual interviews was based solely around their perceptions, experiences, voices and the review of literature. Direct quotations from the research
participants has been contributed to this text as a means of illuminating and providing accuracy to their narratives.

The researcher posed the following 6 questions to each participant: (1.) Can you describe the role that race and racism played in your K-12 and college experiences leading up to you becoming a classroom teacher? (2.) How does race impact the decisions of African-American males to not enter the education profession? (3.) What do you describe as your motivational factors for entering and remaining? (4.) What unique benefits do African-American males bring to the school environment in the context of institutional racism? (5.) Do you any ideas on the ways to recruit and retain more African-American men into the profession given the ingrained nature of racism in schools and our society? (6.) How has your experience with race and racism affected your decision to enter and remain in the classroom? Through these 6 interviews numerous themes and sub themes emerged.

**Narrative Discussion of the Findings.**

**Introduction.** As an African-American male, parent, and educator, the subject of this case study held a special significance to me. Growing up in the United States there seems to be multiple views on justice, equality, quality of life, the value of life, and on the definition and appropriate manner and time to push for changes. As such, being African-American, my distinct experience is of growing up and being the constant victim of overt acts of racism and the constant target of institutional acts of racism. Living here makes it virtually impossible to avoid its oppressive glares as it inhabits every institution and every piece of infrastructure that is the United States of America and her territories.
In this case study I explored the experiences of African-American male teachers and their perceived impact on students and schools. This particular subject is important because school is a law mandated 13 year process (K-12). The law makes attendance mandatory, but the law did not take into account the quality of learning and interactions that are to take place over those 13 years. School in America, like all other institutions, were never designed with African-Americans in mind. They were never set up to build our self-worth, develop our higher order thinking skills, nor push us out into the world as bosses and managers. School has been a place used to place and keep us in an inferior place (Macleod, 2009).

**Themes.** Through the analysis of the data 7 themes emerged from the 6 semi-structured interviews.

(a.) How Teachers See and Experience Racism and (b.) How they interpret Classism in how it affects African-Americans.

Delgado et al., (2010) describe racism as a completely integrated “part of the structure of legal institutions”. It is seen as a normal part of the everyday workings of the United States legal structures (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The researcher discovered through this process that there were differences illuminated in the understanding of the definition of racism and the extent to which and how it affects African-Americans. Each African-American respondent described it as a system in which people of color were discriminated and denied opportunities based on their physical appearance not being White. Their descriptions spoke to a wide historical process where individuals and institutions denied them opportunities based on the color of their skin.

**Racism is normal, not aberrational.** According to Delgado & Stefancic (2010), Critical Race Theory (CRT) posits that “racism is ordinary, not aberrational—‘normal science,’ the usual way
society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country” (p. 29). The system of “White-over-color” that has been a fixture throughout the history of the United States furthers the status quo and furthers the interests of the White power structure. The inherent benefit to the White power structure and the White middle class of the current racist system provides a disincentive for Whites to effectively attack and rid society of institutional racist practices.

Racism is found in everything ranging from who gets to vote, who and how one is policed, the severity of prison sentencing, where one is able to live, how one reacts to an African-American getting on an elevator, perceptions of how one got into college and how they got a job (Delgado et al., 2010). In their descriptions, racism was a normal way of American life that did not exempt people of color. It also affects how much an African-American will pay for a car, the interest on a car loan, if he will get hired, how much a home mortgage interest rate is, the quality of medical services he will receive, and the quality of my K-12 experiences and quality of one’s education (Bell, 1993; Aud, 2010).

The White participants’ perception of racism in the interviews demonstrated a clear difference in understanding based on race. Bell (2002) described it as a condition in which the privilege bestowed on whites in this society forms a wall that effectively blocks their view and impairs their ability to discern the harmful manner in which their normed attitudes, bias, and cultural practices harm minority students. Throughout the questioning, in some instances through denial there seemed a hesitance to fully acknowledge the existence of racism (O’Brien et al., 2009).
In offering an explanation of the psychology related to denial of racism, Burley (2005) posits that Whites hold a “Justice Ideology” that shapes their worldview. Burley further explained that White culture is built on individualism and that the idea of a meritocracy is firmly rooted in White thinking. Because of this framework for seeing the world, Whites refuse to see acts of racism as institutional and insist on seeing them as individualistic because the idea of normed practices enforced by systematic means goes against their notion of meritocracy. Speaking to classism, studies have shown that African-American assimilation into the middle class has not made much of a difference in school discipline, special education referrals, raising the expectations of African-American students by the largely White teacher population, and the achievement gap (Anderson-Clarke et al., 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Byron & Lightfoot, 2013).

The findings on the perception of racism among educators was very disturbing given the tremendous influence they have on the success outcomes of African-American students and students of color. Hinchey (2006) explained that white teachers brought up and trained in a system of racial and cultural biases ultimately bring those racial prejudices and biases into the classroom setting (Allen and Boykin, 1992; McLeod, 2009; Asante, 2000).

Anderson-Clark et al., (2008) conducted a study and found that white teachers evaluated black students and students with black sounding names academically and behaviorally more negatively than their black peers and the authors reported that the rating became progressively worse over time. In each interview there was an acknowledgement of this problem, it is written about extensively in the scholarly literature as well, yet the practice persists (Anderson-Clark et al., 2008; Bell, 2002; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Banks & Banks, 2009). This goes back to the
data that emerged from the theme on racism. Racism as normal has proven to be harmful. Further review of the data showed that the 3 African-American males and the 3 White males did not have much hope in there being changes in the institutional racism that is normed. Like the African-American males in the study, 2 of the White males (Oscar and Horace) share the view that the only immediate and feasible approach to creating positive outcomes is through the individual acts of the teachers and administrators.

Through the findings of this study and future research on this subject, the researcher is optimistic that a full acknowledgement of the problem and smart trainings designed to address it will create more favorable outcomes for African-Americans and other students of color.

(c.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences as students and observations and (d.) Teachers’ autobiographical experiences that guide their teaching. (e.) Benefits of African-American Male teachers and Role Models and (f.) Experiences that motivate and drive their practice.

CRT provides Counter-narratives. Counter storytelling is an important component in social justice. It provides a voice often missing from oppressed groups, these stories provide a context to which the oppressed are heard among the echoes of neglectful cries of justice ideologies of meritocracy and color blindness often put forth as normal views, the status quo.

Teachers discussed their personal experiences, observations, and how those experiences guide their instructional practices. All participants reported witnessing or being part of a negative experience in the K-12 learning environment. The African-American participants described Personal experiences as students (Cassius being bused to a White suburban district and being
lumped with other African-Americans into low level classes), or difficult experiences as adults (Carter working in an all-White Suburban district and having White parents question his disciplinary practices; Patrice being the lone African-American male and having his cultural concerns brushed off by White colleagues).

The White male participants described their observations of African-American students being singled out for behavioral concerns and these experiences continuing throughout their education experience. These behaviors were described as normal by each participant in a system facilitated by White teachers and administrative staff. Oscar spoke to the normal occurrence of Black kids being singled out beginning in elementary school and “developing a persecution complex” as they continue on with their education. In explaining the causes for this cycle of experiences, Hotchkins (2002) posits, “deficit perceptions about African-American students as held by White teachers and administrators serve as sources of racial microaggressions within K–12 context (p. 1).

African-American teachers were asked how knowledge and experiences with racism guided their practice. Teachers did not speak to nor expressed hope in systemic changes but spoke to the manner in which they worked as individuals to provide fair experiences for African-American and other students of color. African-American males spoke of being change agents through how they disciplined students, openly acknowledging the racial prejudices students may face, encouraging academic success, and discussing with their students the difficult task that lay ahead of them and how racism will be an obstacle that they must overcome (Brittian & Gray, 2014). It is imperative that in a system embedded with rationalized racial oppression, that teachers be cognizant of this reality and that they tactfully address this with their students.
In discussing the benefits of having African-American males in urban school classrooms the participants gave the following reasons: (a.) They are motivated to make a difference and they provide needed male figures. (b.) They serve as strong male figures and role models. (c.) They can relate to the students and parents culturally. (d.) They help to break negative or limiting stereotypes of Black men.

Patrice was adamant in stating his belief of the benefits that African-American males bring to classrooms and school. Agreeing with his sentiments, James (2002) posits, “the [personal] narrative of a Black male teacher” had important social and political commitments that led him to become a teacher. Lewis (2006) backs this sentiment as well in his identification of 3 factors that lead African-American males into teaching: 1. the desire to help improve society. 2. Helping the youth find success through education, and 3. Finding stable employment. This is important as Wilson & Manswell-Butty (1999) believe that White teacher attitudes and practices have demonstrated insensitivities or disregard of African-American culture and the formative development of African-American males during their K-12 school education, therefore, African-American teachers represent a shift from biased norms and can present someone from their community with a shared background who is invested and may work to bring the best out of that student. Hamre, and Pianta’s (2001) research found that students may benefit from positive relationships and experiences with teachers of shared racial, gender, and cultural affiliation several years beyond the initial teaching and learning experience.

Lynn (2006) posits, “Racial identity can be a driving force for developing the commitment to improve the lives of African-American youth in urban schools” (p. 230). Upon completion of this study the researcher realized that there is a lot of work that needs to be done
specifically involving teaching the adults to recognize the complexity and depth at which racism permeates our society and their psyche. Hughes (2010) agrees that African-American male students seeing an African-American male authority and teaching figure leading their classroom can be offered culturally relevant feedback and the examples may serve to model productive behaviors and lead to motivation for academic excellence.

If the people in the classrooms and those in power perceive racism as an individual action and ignore the institutional oppression, the problem will persist and African-Americans and other students of color will continue to be harmed (Bell, 1993). This perception has to change if we are to make progress against oppression, by providing a voice to African American male educators surrounding their perceptions and experiences as students and teachers, their voices can serve as part of the counter-narrative in fighting racial oppression.

(g.) **Recruitment and retention as perceived by teachers.**

**A Voice in recruitment.** In exploring their ideas for the recruitment of African-American male teachers, Participants mentioned the following: (a.) the use of financial incentives. (b.) Beginning early recruitment programs specifically targeting African-Americans in elementary school.

Financial incentives as a recruitment tool make sense as Byrd et al., (2011) posit, “African-American males' selection of education as a major in college is abysmally low when compared to other collegiate majors”. Pabon, Anderson, & Haroon (2011) also found that recruitment geared toward African-American males encountered myriad challenges in attracting qualified candidates due to problems rooted in their precollege education experiences.
Shipp (1999) saw low wages as a deterrent for African-American males entering the teaching profession. Financial incentives have proven to be a common way of attracting African-American male teacher candidates (Smith, 2012). One of the biggest factors in deciding which educational path to take is the amount of pay an individual has the opportunity to make once a degree has been acquired. Respondents also spoke about the development of recruitment models that begin as early as elementary school grades.

**Implications for further research, practice, and work.**

This section presents a discussion of the implications this research holds for future study in the area of African-American male teachers, their perceived impact on students and their schools, Black and White differing perspectives on racism, and the lived experiences of K-12 African-American male students.

In keeping with the traditions of Critical Race Theory, this paper examined the experiences and perceptions of African-American teachers in an urban school in their unique voices. Although White participant interviews were included in this exploration, valuable data was gleaned from it and the similar and contrasting point-of-views provided some startling findings for the researcher. The findings are presented in the next 3 sections.

**The first finding.** White teacher understandings of the definition and scope of racism and institutional racism differed from that of African-Americans. Each African American participant defined racism as the wholesale exclusion or denial of opportunities, and the mistreatment of African-Americans based on physical appearance, ancestry, ethnicity or other. All African-Americans described institutional forms of racism in their definitions, indicating the normalness of the practice in society whereas White participants did not.
All three African-Americans consistently spoke to the environmental and structural arrangement of the school as a driver for discrimination. In the case of Cassius, he spoke to the school integration program and the placement of all of the students of color into the low leveled academic classes. Patrice spoke about the school practice of ignoring and invalidating the cultural capital of the African American students. Carter spoke about his experience as the only African-American male teacher in the school and having his authority over White students repeatedly invalidated by parents and staff. Each individual spoke to the institutional practices that lead to their respective negative experiences and their observations of negative experiences of family members and students.

In the case of the White participants Oscar was the only one to acknowledge the institutional or “infrastructural” racism that is endemic in American society and schools. He elaborated and explained that beginning in elementary school, through repeated bad experiences of being singled out and more severely punished for similar acts committed by White peers, African-American males develop a “persecution complex” and lose interest in school. Che and Horace spoke to individual acts of teacher micro-aggressions and low expectations, veering away from the institutional components talked about by their African-American colleagues.

Each participant made mention of class in relation to the negative experiences of African American students in American K-12 public schools. The African-American participants spoke of classism as a function of racism. White participants framed the class issues separate from American racism. From the researcher’s perspective, racism and the benefits bestowed upon the dominant group served to create an underclass of African-Americans, and other people of color.
Racism limits the quality of education one may receive, the address and zip codes one may live, the jobs and incomes they may earn, and the access to loans that allows for economic social mobility. In attempting to discuss class, a limiter separates from the racism, it seeks to deny the role White people play in maintaining it. Giroux (1999) posits that shifting the blame from racism to an individual narrative of hard work and class essentially works to alleviates White whom enjoy the privileges and maintains the social order, a free pass from assuming responsibility of their system of oppression.

This in itself is problematic in the sense that a condition exists where the oppressed is dependent on an oppressor to change their hearts and practices while believing what they have always done is right and normal. Hines (2016) explains that “white people are able to live as Americans who are insulated from race-based stress and racial inconvenience” (p. 131).

Addressing the issues of racism with White teachers is inherently difficult due to the fact that Whiteness is invisible and normal, “white people and white values are usually unmarked and unnamed” (Hines, 2016, p. 130). In addressing the difficulties of exploring the topic of racism with White people, Hines explains,

“The disadvantage of this worldview is twofold. First, individualism allows white people to define racism as being isolated acts instead of being a part of the structural fabric of society. Second, individualism convinces white people that they have not benefited over time from the historical and generational accumulation and dissemination of wealth and opportunities to generations of white people” (p. 132).

This wall of privilege effectively blocks their view and impairs their ability to discern the harmful manner in which their normed attitudes, bias, and cultural practices harm African-
American and other students of color (Bell, 2002). The researcher also found that African-American males as well as the White males in this study did not have any ideas or hope in there being institutional changes in the ways that the education system treats students of color. Each participant saw their individual work as significant in changing the quality of education and experiences for African-American males and other students of color.

**The second finding.** “Normal” practices in education carried out by White teachers are harming African-American students and these experiences are deterrents of the later pursuit in the career field of public k-12 education. Here is an acknowledgement of African-American students experiencing negative interactions at the hands of White teachers throughout their K-12 education, yet the practices persist. Pabon, Anderson, & Haroon (2011) cite these negative experiences as part of what drives African-American males away from entering careers in the education profession. African-Americans as a group have historically been tasked with pushing against the pressure of White racism to secure first-class citizenship rights and opportunities.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr (1967) found it incumbent on us to lead the change, he stated “If first-class citizenship is to become a reality for the Negro, he must through a powerful action program assume the primary responsibility for making it so (p. 91). Nelson Mandela is quoted as saying, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. In the current day, White Rational Reasoning (WRR) of normed harmful behaviors currently stand in the path of African-Americans attaining the type of quality education and school experiences that could inspire them to go on and become the institutions and change the oppression on an institutional level.
Implications for Personal Practice. This qualitative case study examined the experiences and perceived impact of African-American male teachers on students in schools. This research included 6 subjects, 3 African-American male teachers with 5-15 years teaching experience and 3 White males with 10-20 years teaching experience. Although designed to illuminate the understandings and value of African-American males in the educational space, this case study exposed the normed practices of racism in the K-12 experience and the adult work experiences of African-American males. This study also illuminated the differences in perceptions of racism and institutional racism in American society.

Throughout the History of the United States the task of working for social change and equality has always fallen on the shoulders of African-Americans (King, 1967). Presently our society is in the midst of a renewed Civil Rights campaign seeking fair treatment by the police and reform of the United States criminal justice system. In order to successfully push forward, quality education outcomes are imperative for African-Americans. Currently, the American Public Education is comprised of a majority student population of color, while the teaching body is over 80% White (NCES, 2015).

If African-Americans and other people of color are to change the world, they require a voice in the ongoing discussion of social justice and a quality education free from the racism that is normed in our education institution. After completing this study, it has become incumbent of this educator to challenge the status quo of low expectations and the behavioral profiling against African-American students and students of color. As a practice I will regularly challenge my colleagues and other education professionals to undergo deep self-examinations of their notion of
social justice, bias, stereotypes, and the willingness to understand the students they signed up to teach.

**Future Recommendations**

For further research, the author suggests qualitative studies examining the experiences and voices of African-American students throughout their K-12 education and how these experiences affect their opinions of teaching as a profession. Also, research should be conducted on the processes and strategies utilized by African-American male teachers in combating racism in schools. Lastly, research should be undertaken examining White teachers’ self-perceptions of racism and how it impacts their instruction and discipline of African-American students.

**Postscript Response to the Interviews.**

**Before.** Prior to embarking on this research journey exploring the experiences of African-American male teachers and the perceptions of their impact on students and schools, I was inundated with a steady barrage of imagery of African-American men being murdered on television and social media. I heard politicians and aspiring presidential candidates espousing incorrect and racist rhetoric about crime statistics, welfare abuse towards African-Americans and other people of color while White people make up the numerical majority of those in these demonized categories. I watched television news accounts of how Black college athletes received long prison sentences while White college athletes committing the same criminal acts have been given shorter sentences and short probationary periods. In urban school systems I am seeing staffs consisting of middle class white women teaching African-American students. I have seen a historical pattern of Black males being singled out for extraneous behaviors. Having
spent over a decade in public education, I have witnessed the birth of an overt process where African-American students are criminalized. In my time I have seen countless students come to school to learn and leave in handcuffs, now part of the criminal justice system. I have been witness to the flow of the school to prison pipeline. I looked forward to hearing from both sides in order to understand this process at play. I wondered, how can well intentioned teachers work with students of color and be oblivious to the inherent obstacles they face and their pain? How can a teacher who would readily self-identify as “enlightened” actively contribute to the systematic racial oppression of their students?

During. Throughout the actual interview process, it started to become clear that there was a noticeable difference in how Black teachers and White teachers saw or perceived racism. One of the nonblack participants in describing racism stated “I think it’s more class than, this institutional racism is more based on different backgrounds of the educators that have a tough time relating to the different background of the students which come from in the poor neighborhoods or different regions that the teachers are not from.” In this instance it was interpreted as a function of misunderstandings and class difference. This shocked me in the sense that concepts such as culture and class values can actually trump doing right by people based on a shared humanity. Another nonblack educator gave an example of how racism plays out in the education system by stating, “I think that a lot of teachers even say, ‘I treat all kids the same. It's the same I don't care what color they are.’ I just think that if the kid struggles it's kind of that in the back of my mind I'm not racist or anything comment it does but I think that some kids are treated differently.” In each example racism is looked at as compartmentalized or individualized instances rather than an institutional systemic process and practice.
After. The African-American participants saw racism as institutional, structural, and normal throughout every part of our society. Cassius explained, “So what does the racism look like? The racism basically looks like a lot of kids who, putting a lot of behavior kids in the low-low classes, she (the teacher) is sending a lot of kids (to the office for discipline), getting on kids for all the wrong things, I can't even like, getting on kids for the way they dress or the hairstyles or random things. I understand the importance of some of it, but some of it was some of these kids it is so petty and the kids know it's petty that they just they do it almost intentionally and the school system is like all right, and she said that we are going to do this. It is what the kids just wanted to begin with. It is just wrong. They have no clue how to interact with our children.” Cassius’ quote ends with the words “They have no clue how to interact with our children”. Later in the interview he explains that this is the norm and that there are very little repercussions for this and that it is a normal part of education in pertaining to African-Americans across the United States. In one instance racism is seen as an individual act. In the bigger picture, these acts are ubiquitous across the institutions to the point that they are normal. Each participant was unable to describe a plan to systematically change the current practices. The African-American males approached the problem from a more individualistic approach to addressing local problems, the White participants spoke of being mindful in their education practices. Ultimately, all sides did not seem to hold out hope for immediate institutional changes.

Upon completion of the data analysis the social situation across the United States has worsened in relation to African-Americans. In the past few weeks there have been video recordings circulated of police murders of unarmed Black men. The Black communities have demanded justice and launched protests. The White media launched defamation campaigns
against the Black victims and painted videotaped murderers as heroes. Two Black ex-military men targeted and killed 8 Police officers and the media and White groups tried to link them to the Black Lives Matter anti Police violence group. When Black people complain about historical oppressive disparities in treatment and proclaim that Black Lives Matter, Whites have counter that “All Lives Matter”, while simultaneously character assassinating Black victims.

Recently a therapist working with his autistic patient had laid on the ground with his arms held up. He identified himself, his client, and what he had been doing to calm him. He had gone the extra mile in compliance and was shot, then cuffed and left on the hot Florida pavement to bleed out while the officer conferred amongst one another before he was taken to a hospital. He asked the Policeman why he shot him and the cop replied, “I don’t know”. Will I enter a school year and see Police handcuffing and escorting an 11-15 year old student of color to prison? Will I see two female students, 1 White, and the other African-American walking the hallways with short shorts, only to later see the African-American student sitting in the office, singled out as violating a dress code inequitably applied to some students? Will I walk out on an academic awards night and not see some of the best and brightest students of color receive academic awards because their behavior did not meet a particular teacher’s standard when behavior and academic achievement are two separate measures of school success? It seems that as long as racial discrimination is seen as individual acts removed from a system inherently supportive of such behaviors, we will continue to struggle with racism and it will further damage the future prospects of African-Americans and other students of color.

**Limitations.** One of the limitations of this study is the purposeful sampling of African-American male and white male teachers in Southeastern Massachusetts. This limits the extrapolation of the
findings to other African-American male teachers in other geographic areas. This study is limited by the focus on African-American males, it cannot be generalized to a larger population. The findings from this study will be distinct and may not be applicable to other ethnic groups and genders. The data cannot be generalized to other members of the African community (women, other professions).
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APPENDIX A

Dear

I am inviting you to participate in a research study to understand the motivation, perceptions, and impact of African American male teachers in an urban middle school environment. This case study research will attempt to understand the shortage of African American males in education and to better understand their views and the views of their school community concerning whether increasing the number of African American male Educators may have a positive impact on academic achievement and school culture.

Participation may be used to provide valuable information for increasing the number of and retaining African American male educators. If you know of any African American male educators, colleagues of an African American male educator, and/or parents of students at this research site whose students were taught by an African American male educator that may be interested in participating in a research study, please feel free to forward this email to them. Your participation would involve a single semi-structured interview that will be conducted by doctoral student Michael L Robinson. The interview completion time is approximately 1-1 ½ hours and will be audio recorded by the researcher.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or if you would like to volunteer to participate, please contact Robinson.mich@husky.neu.edu. Participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael L Robinson, M.Ed
Student Investigator
Your part in this study will be confidential. Participants will be given identification codes instead of using real names. All data and files related to the researcher study will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for three years then destroyed. Each respondent’s transcripts will be electronically filed and will be password-protected. Responses will also be printed and stored in a locked cabinet. Upon completion of the study, the researcher will make all results and findings available to participants. This researcher will audio record interviews and the recording will be destroyed after being transcribed. In the published reports, there will not be any information provided which would assist in identifying any participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have. If you decide to participate in the study, you are free to address any concerns or to withdraw at any time.

Contacts and Questions
If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Michael L. Robinson, Tel: 617.407-5670, Email: robinson.mich@husky.neu.edu. You can also contact Dr. Karen Reis-Medwed, College of Professional Studies, 360 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.390.4073, Email: k.reissmedwed@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Statement of Consent
I agree to take part in this research.

Signature of person agreeing to take part/ Date

APPROVED
NU IRB# CPS16-0504
VALID THROUGH 08-31-19
Printed name of person above

Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent/ Date

Printed name of person above
Demographic Questionnaire

1. Identification Code

2. Age

3. How do you describe your race/ethnicity?

4. What is your role at the research site?
Interview Questions: African-American males

Interview Protocol A

In each interview provide a pleasant introduction. Thank each participant for their involvement and provide a description of the study.

**Research question:** What are the African-American male teachers’ experiences and perceptions of their impact on schools and on their students?

**Sub questions:**
1. Can you describe the role that race and racism played in your K-12 and college experiences leading up to you becoming a classroom teacher?

2. How does race impact the decisions of African-American males to not enter the education profession?

3. How has your experience with race and racism affected your decision to enter and remain in the classroom?

4. What do you describe as your motivational factors for entering and remaining?

5. What unique benefits do African-American males bring to the school environment in the context of institutional racism?

6. Do you any ideas on the ways to recruit and retain more African-American men into the profession given the ingrained nature of racism in schools and our society?
**Interview Questions: Colleagues, Supervisor, and Parent Focus Group**

**Interview Protocol B**

In each interview provide a pleasant introduction. Thank each participant for their involvement and provide a description of the study.

**Research question:** What are the African-American male teachers’ experiences and perceptions of their impact on schools and on their students?

**Sub questions:**
1. Can you describe the role that race and racism play in K-12 and college experiences leading up to African-American males becoming a classroom teacher?

2. How does racism embedded into the education institution deter African-American males from entering the education profession?

3. What would you describe as the motivational factors of African-American males for entering and remaining?

4. What unique benefits do African-American males bring to the school environment that nonblack teachers of African-American students may not bring?

5. Do you any ideas on the ways to recruit and retain more African-American men into the profession given the ingrained nature of racism in schools and our society?
NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION

Date: June 13, 2016
IRB #: CPS16-05-04

Principal Investigator(s):
Karen Reiss Medwed
Michael Robinson

Department:
Doctor of Education Program
College of Professional Studies

Address:
20 Belvidere
Northeastern University

Title of Project:
A Case Study: African American Male Teacher Experiences and Perceived Impact on Schools and Their Students

Participating Sites:
Brockton Public Schools permission in file

DHHIS Review Category:
Expedited #6, #7

Informed Consents:
One (1) signed consent form

Monitoring Interval:
12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: JUNE 12, 2017

Investigator's Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection