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Edward E. Bell

Capella University, edward.bell@capella.edu

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand how a Black male experienced the interview process while seeking a teaching position. The participant and I attempted to answer how race and/or gender played a role in his interviewing experiences. The researcher used a qualitative approach to interview this individual. Data analysis revealed major findings contributing to this Black male's interviewing experiences: Racism played into the hiring process in subtle ways, and just because this candidate was prepared to teach, that preparation did not guarantee his employment. The findings from this narrative account might prove helpful in understanding why there is currently a shortage of Black male teachers.

A Narrative Inquiry: A Black Male Looking to Teach

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Capella University, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand how a Black male experienced the interview process while seeking a teaching position. The participant and I attempted to answer how race and/or gender played a role in his interviewing experiences. The researcher used a qualitative approach to interview this individual. Data analysis revealed major findings contributing to this Black male's interviewing experiences: Racism played into the hiring process in subtle ways, and just because this candidate was prepared to teach, that preparation did not guarantee his employment. The findings from this narrative account might prove helpful in understanding why there is currently a shortage of Black male teachers. Keywords: Black Males, Discrimination, School, Qualitative

A lack of Black male teachers contributes to unequal educational opportunities. The paucity of Black males in the classroom is not a recent phenomenon (Daniels, 2010). The absence of Black male teachers might be attributed to many factors; however, the prevailing ones appear to be the low pay teachers receive and the assumption that teaching is a female-dominated profession (Dogan, 2010). Today only 2% of the nation's 4 million public school teachers are Black men (Cottman, 2010).

Daylen Kyree (a pseudonym) is a 24-year-old Black male living in eastern North Carolina. He received his college education from one of the Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and his master's degree from a predominately White institution, with both schools being located in eastern North Carolina. At the time of the initial interview (August, 2010), Daylen had been teaching for less than one year.

Qualitative research allows the researcher to ask questions and assumes that actions are to be understood in a natural environment (Creswell, 2009). Merriam (2009) stated that, "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed" (p. 6). A narrative study approach is best suited to understanding Daylen's experiences. A narrative inquiry fits with an epistemological stance in a way that impacts a person's life by scrutinizing power and structure. Storytelling is a compelling strategy used by marginalized groups to understand a person's life. The value of narratives lies in giving the audience an opportunity to understand the experience of the storyteller (McQueen & Zimmerman, 2006)

Critical race theory provides a theoretical framework for analyzing Daylen's experiences in regards to race and discrimination (Ansley, 1989; Howard, 2008). This theory contends that racism is ordinary in society. In spite of a moral obligation of fairness and equality, racism and discrimination do exist. Critical race theory had its beginnings in the legal system, but has since spread to other disciplines and work environments (Ansley). Critical race theory is useful in understanding the inequalities not only in the legal and educational fields, but also in other environments (Ansle; Howard). Critical race theory can be applied in Daylen's situation; it is important to understand the interconnectedness of race and gender and Daylen's employment experience. When there is a minority group within a disenfranchised status, one can look through the lens of critical race theory to begin to question the various ideologies that may influence perceptions and notions of race and discrimination (Howard).

This inquiry provides an account of Daylen's journey to become a middle school English/language arts teacher in eastern North Carolina. Based on Daylen's journey, I decided to retell his story. Out of eight job interviews and six declined ones (by Daylen), he was offered

only one job. After an initial conversation with Daylen, I decided to conduct this inquiry. I interpreted Daylen's story based on his experiences.

Literature Review

Schools have been aware of and sensitive to gender issues since the 1980s. Women account for a larger percentage of classroom teachers, for male teachers represent only 13% of teachers (Zeringo & Baldwin-LeClair, 2001). And only 2% of the nation's 4 million public school teachers are Black men (Cottman, 2010). The declining number of minority teachers, especially Black males, is a national concern (Cottman).

Davis (2003) concluded that there is scant research addressing the interaction of gender and race as related to teaching Black males. Some may contend that the race and gender of the teacher do not matter as long as the teacher can effectively teach all children. Cooper (2003) noted that White teachers can effectively teach Black males. She further concluded effectiveness is enhanced when White teachers have respect and commitment to the Black community, empathy for Black children, and develop a racial consciousness and a willingness to learn from the Black community (p. 419).

However, Dee (2004) postulated that race and gender do matter in student achievement. Today's teaching positions are filled disproportionately by White middle-class females (Zeringo & Baldwin-LeClair, 2001). The scarcity of Black males in the classroom reduces the number of Black male role models and may even impact academic achievement in Black male students (Dee). Mitchell (1998) concluded that a teacher's cultural experience can motivate student academic success. Several studies have documented the effects of the teacher-student mismatch on the learning experiences of Black children (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). White middle-class female teachers play a critical role in educating Black males and may advance perpetual biases or dominant ideology that lowers their academic expectations of Black males (Allen, 2015). Allen further postulated that "race and gender intersect in ways that contribute to the structural impediments related to Black male stereotypes, misinterpreted behavioral performances, and disproportionate discipline" (p. 78).

Teacher Education Programs

The need for Black male teachers is clear, yet their journey to a teaching position is hard and arduous (Cottman, 2010; Siraj-Blatchford, 1991). Education programs continue to struggle to prepare Black males for teaching. It is reasonable to conclude that most students will never have a Black male teacher (Cottman). Given the vast employment opportunities for Black males, they often seek jobs with higher salaries and more competitive futures. In fact, many are encouraged to seek nonteaching opportunities (Cottman; Siraj-Blatchford). Those who do opt to enter teacher education programs face challenges such as compromising their own cultural values and lived experiences (Milner, Pabon, Woodson, & McGee, 2013).

Black male teachers are needed in the diverse classrooms across America. They serve as role models for all students (Lewis, 2006). Dee (2004) posited that teachers of the same cultural backgrounds as their students may be in a better position to motivate students toward academic achievement and help them view their schooling experiences positively.

Some educators and school personnel have attempted to maintain a diverse teaching force that is representative of the student body. For example, in Prince George County in Maryland, the public school district formed a partnership to recruit Black male teachers through support and mentoring. Participants in the program received assistance with teaching fees and technology. The "Call Me Mister" program is a partnership between Clemson University and several HBCUs in South Carolina as an initiative to increase the number of Black male teachers

(James, 2002; Lewis, 2006).

It is no secret that in this nation there is one single demographic dominating the teacher profession: white females (Anthony, 2009; Cottman, 2010; McDougal, 2009). Delpit (1995) concluded that Black male teachers are at odds with teacher education programs. Their lived experiences are not valued in the programs, and they often have to give up their beliefs and traditions in order to navigate through an academic pre-service teaching environment. Black males tend to question the validity of their pre-service training programs (Dee, 2004). Goings, Smith, Harris, Wilson, and Lancaster (2005) noted that teacher education programs tend to focus on Black males' deficits rather than their assets. Doing so leaves White classmates not wanting or knowing how to teach Black males (Goings et al.). When this happens, teacher candidates leave their training with the notion that Black males are at risk because they are loud or too aggressive, rather than focusing on their strengths.

Black Males and the Public School System

Public schools have cast doubt on the intellectual capabilities of Black males for some time. Without knowing all the factors that can motivate and increase positive school experiences for Black males, education has become just another arduous process for Black males to attempt to navigate successfully (Davis, 2003; Warren, 2014). Black male students face discrimination and biases in teaching practices (Siraj-Blatchford, 1991). Their feelings and experiences are often dismissed or overlooked. Many experience less challenging work and have educators who lack the will or the means to teach them compassionately and effectively. A student's educational experience is important. Emdin stated, "Too often educators are afraid to acknowledge that differences exist between Black males and non-Black male teachers" (2012, p. 140). Cooper (2003) posited, "It is imperative that teacher education programs recognize the importance of assistance and training for White teachers in the area of the history of Black education in America" (p. 425). Warren (2014) concluded that culturally diverse students deserve teachers who understand and appreciate their home lives and personal experiences (p. 399).

In addition, Downer, Goble, Myers, and Pianta (2016) concluded that pre-kindergarten student gains are tied to the race of the teachers. Student gains were greater when the classroom teacher was the same race as the student. Downer et al. noted that White teachers reported more behavior problems with Black boys than Black teachers reported. This assertion dovetails with Bell (2014), who asserted that Black males are more likely to be placed in special education classes, suspended, or made to feel less competent than their White counterparts.

It can be concluded from the sources cited above that when Black males are bombarded with practices that devalue their culture and insist on a Eurocentric teaching paradigm, they are more apt to fail. Black teachers can have a significant impact on student achievement because of their shared cultural experiences with oppression and discrimination (Bell, 2014; Mitchell, 1998; Milner, 2006). For instance, Mitchell noted that teachers' experiences might help Black students make meaning of learning and motivate them toward success. Teacher and student shared experiences can also be an academic trajectory in migrating the concerns of Black male students (Mitchell).

A child's educational experience depends a great deal on his or her social conditioning and future outlook. Davis (2003) noted that when the culture of learning is damaged, Black male students cannot find a positive connection to the learning environment, thus reducing their likelihood of entering a field that shows no respect for them (Eggen & Kauchak, 2003). Therefore, it should not be surprising that Black males would not embrace teaching as a profession. Milner (2007) stated that teachers need to "speak possibility" (p. 236) to students to empower successful outcomes. He further concluded that "deficit thoughts" may cause

teachers to lower their expectations of Black males (p. 236). Lewis (2006) surveyed 147 Black male teachers and concluded that school districts should make hiring Black male teachers, particularly those from HBCUs, a priority. Lewis noted that HBCUs have always been a training ground for preparing Black teachers. Lewis also noted that school districts should begin the teacher recruitment as early as high school and provide the necessary funding to increase the number of Black males in teacher education program (p. 228). Lewis noted that other school districts have an obligation to recruit from within the school system. Working with HBCUs and identifying potential Black male teachers early could significantly impact teacher recruitment (Lewis).

Discrimination in Hiring Black Male Teachers

Employment discrimination is a reality for Black males. Black men experience unemployment rates that are higher than their White counterparts. There are vast income inequalities regardless of social and cultural status among Black men. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Darity and Mason (1998) observed racial and gender disparities in the economy. Black males continue to face employment discrimination. The unemployment rate for Black men is 16.8%, but it is 7.7% for white men (Baer, 2011). Despite all efforts, Black males continue to have the highest unemployment rate of all Ethnic groups (Cornileus, 2013; Pang & Gibson, 2001). Even among college graduates, Black college graduates have the highest unemployment rate (Jones & Schmitt, 2014). Income inequality disproportionately impacts Black males (Cornileus, 2013; Pang & Gibson, 2001), and Black males lack social capital when compared to other groups (Johnson & Eby, 2011).

Given what is known about discrimination against Black men in the workplace, it is not difficult to fathom that racism is also a reason why Black males are not hired as teachers. Despite the call to increase the number of Black male teachers, modest progress has been made. Teacher education programs struggle to attract and prepare Black male teachers (Milner et al., 2013).

The Need to Hire

The recruitment and retention of Black male teachers has garnered a surge of attention in both academic and popular press (Lewis, 2006). While the "system" bemoans the need to increase the number of Black male teachers, the urgency to hire seems negligent. Dee (2004) concluded that there is a positive connection between student and teacher in terms of improved academic performance. Black male role models may impact student achievement in positive ways (Dee; Bell, 2010a, 2010b). However, Lewis stated that the top three reasons for Black males wanting to teach were to help young people, to obtain a job, and to contribute to humanity.

Researchers argue that Black male teachers can have a profound impact on the academic achievement of Black male students (Dixson, 2003). Black male teachers tend to possess cultural and social competency to boost academic achievement in Black males. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders know all too well the benefits that Black male teachers can bring to the classrooms (Dixson; Siraj-Blatchford, 1991).

This research is important in filling the gap in the literature by providing additional insight into why there may be a dearth of Black male teachers. In addition, this study will add to the literature by providing a narrative that illuminates the personal story of a Black male looking to teach. Daylen's story may not be unique; however, this qualitative inquiry can contribute to the scant research addressing how race and gender may collide in hindering the employment of Black male teachers.

Researcher Stance

A researcher's bias should be made known (Polkinghorne, 2007). I am a Black male who researches and writes articles about the plight of Black males. I present my findings at workshops and offer lectures on the social, academic, and cultural concerns that confront Black males. In addition, I have written extensively about Black males and was awarded the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award, given by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for my work with at-risk males. I was named "Tar Heel of the Week" by *The News & Observer.* Most recently, I produced a video entitled *What Does It Mean to Be a Black Man?* to present this message on yet another platform. I have written several opinion papers and books that address the social and cultural challenges Black males encounter, such as being judged based on opinions, perceptions, and stereotypes. I also help organize an "African American Male Summit" to highlight the struggles and complexities that tend to thwart the achievements and accomplishments of Black males. My current work in the field adds credibility to the findings.

Method

The purpose of this study was to understand Daylen's job interview experiences and to explore the intersections of race, gender, and employment in the context of pursuing a teaching position. Daylen was purposefully selected for this study based on an initial conversation that we had. In talking with Daylen, I learned that he had experienced difficulties obtaining a teaching assignment. After our conversation, I asked Daylen if he wanted be a part of this inquiry. In order to accomplish the study's results, a narrative approach was most suitable. This account interprets Daylen's experiences looking for work as a Black male. I informed Daylen that he would be making a valuable contribution to the field of education. Prior to data collection, Daylen consented to the study. Ethical procedures and standards for research were reviewed and approved by All of the Children, Inc., an organization whose mission is to address the needs of at-risk youth. I informed him that he could withdraw from the study at any time.

Narrative research was the best type of qualitative research for this inquiry. Narrative research employs a mechanism to gain insight into lived experiences. Further, narrative data can be collected through storytelling and interviews that allow the informant to tell a story about an experience. This type of design upholds a literary tradition of collecting stories and arriving at interpretations by transcribing and analyzing an account of one's life (James, 2002; Lieblich, Mashiacah-Tuval, & Zilber, 1998; McQueen & Zimmerman, 2006). Storytelling is a common method used by underserved groups to retell their story (Lieblich et al.; McQueen & Zimmerman). Stories present as a mechanism to expound upon people "telling it like it is." A narrative is not fact finding, but it provides arguable information to the reader (Polkinghorne, 2007). In addition, the interpretive narrative approach provides readers the opportunity to hear amplified voices, especially from marginalized groups (McQueen & Zimmerman, 2006; Howard, 2008). Narrative research can be described as descriptive or explanatory (Sandelowski, 1991). The former is used in this analysis by describing the particular life story of the informant. The questions that guided the researcher were:

(1) How did Daylen feel about his interviewing experiences?
(2) How did race and/or gender play a role in Daylen's interviewing experiences?

The main source of data collection was through open-ended interviewing. The interviews were semi-structured (Creswell, 2009) and lasted up to an hour in length per interview. Six interviews were conducted from August 16 to December 15, 2010. The purpose of the study was to understand Daylen's interviewing experiences and how race played a role

in them. The initial interviews focused on Daylen's entering the teaching field; the second set of interviews focused on Daylen's enrollment in a teacher education program; the third set of interviews concentrated on Daylen's interview experiences. The inquiry interviews concentrated on open discussion with the informant, and this allowed Daylen the freedom to share his experiences and perceptions. All of the interviews were held in a local library. Notes were taken during each interview and transcribed. The informant was asked questions such as, "Tell me about your interviewing experiences," and "How did race and gender play into your interviewing experiences?"

Data analysis is an ongoing process. Marshall and Rossman (2006) noted that data analysis brings order, structure, and interpretation together in making sense of collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I developed code words that summarized sections of the transcripts. Data coding took place in two phases. Data coding ranged from single words to complete sentences. Then I coded longer passages and reconfigured the codes (Saldaña, 2009). These data consisted of information collected from the interview transcripts and notes from the study. The interview data were organized from the interviews based on the research questions (Creswell, 2009). I did not begin the data analysis until all interviews were completed. Data were organized sequentially to understand Daylen's experience, which made the data easier to understand and evaluate. Themes were generated after coding (Saldana, 2009). Daylen's significant experiences on his journey to teach were based on the specific details that he provided during this inquiry. I attempted to precode by using colored markers and then made inferences about how Daylen felt about his interviewing experiences and how race played a part in them.

To ensure additional creditability and trustworthiness of the findings, member checking was employed to allow the informant to match and validate responses. The goal of member checking is to establish truth (Polkinghorne, 2007; Sandelowski, 1991). In addition, the researcher elicited the support of two peer reviewers to help make sense of the data. These reviewers have over 20 years of combined experience working with Black males and with knowledge of qualitative research.

Results

Daylen's experience will not only illuminate the complexities of his lived experiences but will also juxtapose the life histories of other Black males by providing a contextual perspective in understanding how culture and race can shape worldview (Bell, 2011; Henry, 1994; Howard, 2008). During the course of the interviews, I was befuddled by Daylen's naiveté in trying to make sense out of his multiple interviews. He assumed that since he was qualified to teach, and since there was a need for Black male teachers, he would not encounter "hurdles" in getting a job. As a Black male with a master's degree in education, Daylen learned that being prepared to teach does not always mean that you are hired to teach. Daylen admitted that he had not yet begun to understand the subtle ways racism and/or cultural hiring practices might influence hiring, regardless of qualifications.

Daylen told his story with empathy and sympathy. He conveyed that he felt he had not lived long enough to feel the "undemonstrative nuances or the silent pejoratives" that can be used to discourage interviewees during the hiring process. Daylen's story of perception and/or reality in pursuing employment is commonplace, especially for any underserved group. The absence of Black male teachers cannot solely be contributed to the absence of Black males in the career teaching pool, but it may be analogous to biased hiring practices. Daylen's story can be considered one of epic importance for many Black males.

Daylen did not always want to become a schoolteacher. Initially, he had plans to become a speech pathologist. After much self-reflection, he changed his career path and

entered a teacher education program in eastern North Carolina. He found his teacher preparation somewhat "easy." However, he had mixed emotions; he was excited and fearful as he began the path toward becoming a teacher. Most important, Daylen's interview journey left him confused; he reasoned that preparation to teach didn't make it easier to teach. He interviewed as a qualified applicant, but he wondered if his race or gender interfered with the perception that he would be a viable, potential teacher. He questioned whether school systems really wanted Black male teachers, or if it was just empty talk. After multiple interviews, Daylen realized that he was part of a system that didn't really want Black male teachers, despite indications to the contrary.

The aim of this study was to understand how Daylen felt about his interview experiences and the role race or gender may have played. The results of the study consisted of responses from Daylen, and these results may help in understanding why our schools have so few Black male teachers. In this section, I begin by providing general information about Daylen and his interview experiences. I follow by presenting an analysis of the recurring themes. I identified:

(1) "I want to teach,"
(2) Preparing to teach, and
(3) The interview journey.

"I Want to Teach."

According to Daylen, he initially did not want to become a teacher. He had aspirations of becoming a speech pathologist. He received his undergraduate degree in English/speech and had been accepted for graduate study. However, he said he had to wait a year before he would be able to begin the speech program.

"I really don't want to teach," Daylen initially thought. For Daylen, teaching was not an option. He had other career dreams and initially resisted the possibility of the profession. Interestingly, as Daylen began to think seriously about being out of school for a year, he grew more interested in becoming a teacher. He wondered, "Am I really a teacher?" He enjoyed working in after-school programs but thought teaching was not for him. Yet he knew Black male teachers were needed. More specifically, Daylen commented:

> Well, I have seen a lot of teachers in action. My father was a teacher...I liked most of my teachers. However, teaching really does not pay...I had only one Black male teacher…and that was in eleventh grade. Black male teachers are extremely rare. I guess that I am needed! I did want more Black male teachers when I was in school. I experienced more Black teachers when I attended an HBCU. Well, I can get my teaching credentials…and become a speech pathologist.

Daylen felt a need to teach, and after experiencing a lack of Black male teachers in his own education, he was motivated to obtain his teaching credentials even though he still wanted to pursue speech pathology. Daylen has come to realize that Black males teachers are needed not only in college but also in K-12 instruction.

Preparing to Teach

Daylen's preparation to teach was marked with slight trepidation and excitement. However, he enrolled in a teacher education program in eastern North Carolina where he

eventually earned a master's degree in teaching. He commented, "Classes were easy and advisors were helpful. The teacher education program was strong and a lot of work, but I was committed." After graduation, Daylen withdraw from the speech pathology program and began to embrace his new profession teaching English and language arts.

Daylen found the teacher education program effective. He considered the preparation work "strong." It is interesting to note that Daylen had a period of ambivalence as he began the teacher education program, but he soon accepted and cultivated his desire to teach.

The Interview Journey

Daylen admitted that he had not really thought about the interview process. Daylen stated, "Most of my college professors reminded me how quickly I would land a job. [They said,] 'You are a Black male with a master's degree…you will get a job quickly,' but they were wrong." From Daylen's demeanor and body language, I was able to discern how sensitive he was about his interview experiences. He stated, "The first interview was one of excitement." He said he was thinking, "Yes, my first career is about to begin." Daylen described his first interview:

> Mr. Kyree, please have a seat…Yes, you have impressive credentials. We are looking for a middle school teacher. Have you taught before? Where is your family from? Tell me about yourself…Well, Mr. Kyree we will be in contact, and thanks for coming in.

According to Daylen, "The first interview was interesting and informative." It helped him to gauge and to prepare for interviews to come. The prospect of teaching was still exciting. He sensed victory. However, after several interviews, Daylen began to question the interview process and the overall commitment schools had to hiring Black male teachers. Daylen stated, "Every interview had the same questions and pleasant interviewers…After eight interviews in eastern North Carolina, I felt like it was a game...They must need to interview a certain number of Black males." He thought, "Does the system really want more Black males, or is it just talk?" Daylen reflected:

> They [the principals who interviewed Daylen] asked how long I had been teaching. They saw my resume — [I had no experience]. They asked, "What are you certified in?" [But] they saw my resume. Again, I responded that I have middle grades certification in English/language arts. Some responded in a patronizing tone: "You are a Black male with a master's degree; you will get a job really quickly." I didn't feel the sincerity in some of the interviews. Some of the schools had no Black male teachers on the teaching staff. What was wrong with me? Here I am, certified and willing — "all degreed up and nowhere to go." I was not looking for a handout. I was just looking to teach. Interviewing became an auction block. I was graded by my looks, actions, size, and color in order to satisfy an interviewing quota. Some interviews were a waste of time. I felt defeated and despondent. I clearly understand why there might not be a larger number of Black males in the teaching field. Perhaps race, gender, and/or culture prohibit classrooms from having Black male teachers. And, yes, [my] favorite line of all: "Well, Mr. Kyree you do not have teaching experience." And I am thinking, "Yes, that is true—it is on my resume."

Daylen's perception is key; he interviewed with six White male principals and two

Black male principals. In all of the schools where he interviewed, no school had more than one Black male teacher, and some schools had no Black males on staff. Given the need for Black male teachers, where are the Black male teachers and where are those who are willing hire them? Daylen commented:

> Perhaps my interviewing skills were poor.... Yet I had met current teachers. Some weren't as impressive as I was! They were teaching—what was wrong with me? I began to measure my skills against them all. Sometimes I won. [Laughs.] Was I held to a different standard? Was race and/or gender a factor? Interviewing became a game. When I would submit my resume, within days interviews were arranged. I felt that I received so many interviews based on my published resume. I looked good on paper! It got to the point that I turned down some interviews. I did not see the point in playing the interview game.

After several interviews, Daylen received follow-up calls from principals: "Mr. Kyree thanks for the interview. I have decided to go with a more experienced teacher. You have great skills…. I wish you well." Or, "Mr. Kyree, have you tried [this school]….What about [that school]?" Or, "Mr. Kyree, you interviewed well." Daylen said, "I was thinking, if I were all that, why did you not hire me?" Daylen later found out that a White female teacher had been hired for the position in most occasions.

After the beginning of the school year (2010), Daylen received a call from another principal who wanted to know if he had been hired. Daylen described,

> I was not sure if he was going to hire me or not—still not sure. I felt that I was, perhaps, a last option. I felt used. I was no longer going to be an interview quota for affirmative action human resource purposes.

Interviewing was harder than graduate school. Daylen described some of the common statements he heard at interviews:

- We are still interviewing.
- I have a teacher retiring and will be contacting you.
- You would be more marketable if you had dual certification. [Yet his certification was clear on his resume.]
- Thanks for coming to the interview. As a Black man with a master's degree, you are marketable.

According to Daylen, a sense of failure and betrayal was apparent in all the interviews. Daylen poignantly narrated the realities that shaped his beliefs and experiences.

He kept feeling that the system had let him and the students down. He felt a sense of "hurt" when he interviewed with two Black administrators. Daylen remarked, "They should know better." Daylen's interview experiences almost led him to stop his pursuit to become a teacher and return to his initial plan to be a speech pathologist. He was "sick" of the games and the hypocrisy in a system that claimed a need to hire more Black male teachers. Daylen stated,

> After my interviewing experiences, there are Black males to be hired. I am not the only one to have gone through these experiences. Perhaps some potential Black male teachers just gave up on the games—some do not enter it, and some, like me, just continue to dream.

Daylen finally received a teaching assignment—one of the two Black principals who interviewed Daylen hired him. Daylen was hired at the school where he did his student teaching. Daylen remarked, "I guess I had to prove myself. The principal knew me, and I know the school. I just wonder if I had not known anyone, would I be teaching?"

Discussion

The lens of critical race theory is helpful in analyzing the intersections of race and gender. Understanding Daylen's perspective through the eyes of a Black man is critical; a feeling of being unwanted is a familiar emotion for many Black males.

School hiring managers cannot deny the lack of Black male teachers in the teaching profession. Daylen felt that he was merely being interviewed to satisfy a quota, and school districts that operate this way pay a steep cost when they neglect to hire qualified Black men. Racism and/or discrimination may be the lenses through which to interpret Daylen's feelings. Daylen's experience is inconsistent with reported concerns about the lack of Black male teachers.

I believe if Black teachers outnumbered White teachers, policies and practices would be implemented quickly to change the complexion of teachers. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Black community to rally to change this dynamic by providing unyielding support of school superintendents, school board chairmen/members, principals, and the community.

Arguably, racism is alive and well. A serious commitment to attract and to hire Black male teachers is questionable and debatable (Dee, 2004). The fact remains that Black males are not characteristically seen as classroom teachers. It is not uncommon for students to receive a K-12 education and never be taught by a Black male teacher. The teaching profession is replete with White middle-class females (Thomas-Lester, 2010). One can surmise that the pool of Black male teachers is limited, or one can even conjecture that the "system" has not issued a compelling mandate to change the status quo. If the nation had more Black male teachers than White female teachers, there would be a crisis of insurmountable proportions—with deliberate speed to change the complexion and the gender of classroom teachers.

As stated above, less than 2% of the nation's teachers are Black men (Cottman, 2010). Dee (2004) noted that the race of a teacher can impact the academic performance of students. Daylen's interviewing experiences can offer insight into why there may be such a small number of Black male teachers. His sentiments towards race and gender can also provide additional insight into why Black men are not hired. Daylen wanted to teach, but he "felt used" during the interview journey. There is a lack of research exploring the gender and race impediments Black males experience when looking for teaching jobs. In making sense of Daylen's interviewing experience, it was important to understand critical race theory and its connection with race and gender. Daylen saw race as a factor in preventing him from being hired to a teaching position quickly. He had a master's degree and was trained at a White institution. He remembered the words of one of his professors: "You are a Black man with a master's [degree], and you won't have an issue finding a job." According to Daylen, "That wasn't true."

Although this study is limited to just one Black male pursuing a teaching job, it can be inferred that additional research must be done to address the experiences of Black males looking for work in this field. As this study explored race and Daylen's experiences, additional research must do the same to advance understanding of the impact race and gender have on the lack of Black males in the teaching profession. In addition, the study took place in eastern North Carolina. Perhaps a Black male in the western or northern part of the country would not have the same issues in finding a teaching job. Another limitation to consider is Daylen's teaching experience—he had none. What if he were an experienced teacher? Would his

interview experiences have been the same?

In view of various positions on generalizability and qualitative research, studies are often criticized for the absence of objectivity. Polit and Hungler (1991) noted that generalizability refers to the degree that findings can be generalized from one study sample to another. Some critics contend that such studies are difficult to replicate and subjects may not be accessible after the inquiry. However, qualitative research and the ability to generalize findings, however criticized, can offer valuable information and rich data to the body of research.

The practical implications for this study can assist school districts and hiring officials in understanding how Black males feel about interviewing for teaching positions. Further, the study's implications can extend to understanding why there is a lack of Black male teachers and whether race and gender are contributing factors in this phenomenon. Though the data in this study described Daylen's interviewing journey and his need and preparation to teach, it is encouraging that researchers may want to further explore the experiences of Black males who are not offered teaching positions.

Recommendations for future research should focus on exploring why there are so few Black male teachers, and it must especially address how race and gender contribute to this problem. Future research may also need to focus on the lived experiences of Black males looking to teach and their journeys into the profession, trying to discern whether or not race is a hiring impediment. Policymakers and those making hiring decisions must explore why less than 2% of the nation's teachers are Black males (Cottman, 2010). Cornileus (2013) concluded that Black males continue to fall prey to disparate treatment and racism; consequently, their employment growth is stunted (Pang & Gibson, 2001).

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Author Note

Dr. Bell is a noted speaker, author, educator, and researcher. He has published peer-viewed articles regarding the education of African-American males as well as various opinion pieces. He most recently appeared in a video entitled: "What does it mean to be a black man?" He currently resides in Raleigh, NC. Dr. Bell received his AAS degree in Criminal Justice Technology from Craven Community College, BA in Criminal Justice from North Carolina Central University, MA in Counseling and Doctorate in educational leadership, both from Liberty University. Dr. Bell is also a licensed school counselor and social studies teacher. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: http://www.dredbell.com and his email is edbell1906@yahoo.com.

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